GRAPEVINE
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Gleneagles Golf Course Named One of the Best

Located inside McLaren Park, Gleneagles Golf Course was named a top nine-hole location by Golf Magazine.

by Betty Parshall

Recently, Golf World magazine came out with its list of the twenty-five top nine-hole golf courses in the country and Gleneagles Golf Course in McLaren Park is ranked as number 17.

The course on the hillside above Sunnydale and not far from Visitacion Valley Middle School is extremely challenging, with narrow fairways, sloping approaches and lots of trees. It also is subject to our usually windy afternoons that make the game even trickier.

The course was built in 1962 by the San Francisco Recreation and Park Department, designed by Jack Fleming (Harding). It was redesigned in 1982 by Robert Muir Graves (Sea Ranch Golf Course) and Erik De Lambert. For people new to the area it can be hard to find since there are no signs to guide visitors to the road off Sunnydale Avenue up to the course parking lot. But once found people, both city residents and those from out of town, keep coming back.

"Devoted followers keep a watchful eye on newcomers for fast play and religious repairing of divots and ball marks. (It's) just a hard core players' course that has been home to everyone from city mayors, low digit players and a loyal crew of golfers who only speak of it in a whisper." See the website www.gleneaglesgoltst.com

Tom Hsieh, Jr., who is general partner of the firm that manages the course for the city, told the San Francisco Chronicle he is very pleased with the ranking – even if it didn't make it into the top ten. He pointed out that most of the others that ranked better were built for a lot more money. And unlike the course that ranked first, Gleneagles is open to the general public.

Last November, Gleneagles welcomed six First Tee San Francisco at Visitacion Valley player to this challenging course. They were welcomed by Mr. Hsieh who presented them with gift bags that included golf balls, tees, ball markers and lip balm, followed by a short orientation and pep talks by several of the Gleneagles "old-timers" before beginning a 5 hole round. In future the course will welcome other Valley students too.

For those who wish to play 18 holes there are two tee-offs for each fairway. But whether one plays nine or eighteen holes, all (age 21 and older) can enjoy the 19th hole for genial hospitality and exchanging tales about the day's game.

Workforce Development Services Soon Heading to Visitacion Valley

by Russel Morine

Job seekers in Visitacion Valley will soon be able to tap into numerous job preparedness opportunities through a wide range of new services funded by the City.

In the coming weeks, a new One Stop Job Career Link Center will open at 73 Leland Ave. Operated by Florence Crittenton Services Family Services, the One Stop Career Link Center will offer a variety of free job search, career development and employment resources for Visitacion Valley residents.

In addition to the One Stop Center, Goodwill Industries and the San Francisco Conservation Corps will be offering job readiness programs to job seekers with barriers to employment.

The San Francisco Redevelopment Agency in conjunction with the San Francisco's Office of Economic and Workforce Development awarded Goodwill and the SF Conservation Corps nearly $650,000 to support job readiness in the community.

Goodwill was awarded $375,000 and the SF Conservation Corps $292,000.

The City's objective is to prepare Visitacion Valley jobseekers for entry into one of the City sponsored "Sector Academies."

The Sector Academies provide job preparation, vocational training, job placement, and other services in order to develop a pipeline of skilled and prepared workers for industries facing staffing shortages and/or identified as having short- or long-term job growth.

There are currently four key industries as priority sectors for the Sector Academies: Construction, Green Collar, Health Care, and Social Service.

Residents with barriers to employment such as a lack of a high school diploma, suspended driver's license, or a lack of child care are encouraged to seek out these job readiness assistance opportunities.

*Goodwill. (415) 575-2110

*San Francisco Conservation Corps (415) 928-SFCC (7322)

New Home Production Up in January

SACRAMENTO New-home building in California rebounded in January from a year earlier, but homebuilding officials cautioned against calling it a recovery as the numbers for January 2009 were extremely low, the California Building Industry Association announced January 24.

"It's great to see some positive activity in the homebuilding industry, but given the fact that we're comparing this month to one of the lowest months on record doesn't exactly bring a housing recovery to mind," said Liz Snow, CBIA's President and CEO. "Still, it's nice to see some increase in homebuilding activity."

According to statistics compiled by the Construction Industry Research Board (CIRB), permits were pulled for 2,979 total housing units in January, up 48 percent from the same month a year ago but down 18 percent from December.

Permits for single-family homes totaled 1,908, up 50 percent from January 2009 but down 28 percent from the previous month, while multifamily permits totaled 1,071, up 45 percent from a year ago and up 11 percent from December.

Ben Bartolotto, Research Director for CIRB, noted that the monthly decreases from December to January were typical as January is usually one of the weakest months for housing starts. He also noted any enthusiasm for the year-over-year increases seen in January should be tempered with the fact that the numbers for January 2009 were extremely low and posted the lowest annual rate on record.

CIRB is forecasting a modest recovery for 2010 with permits being pulled for 52,000 total units, up slightly from the record-low 36,289 permits pulled in 2009.

Snow added that in order to capitalize on the strong start for 2010, lawmakers should enact the new homebuyer tax credit proposed under Governor Schwarzenegger's jobs package as soon as possible to keep the positive momentum going.

"The tax credit proposal will give a much needed shot in the arm to the housing industry and help build on this momentum by stimulating the housing market, clearing out inventory, and reigniting job-generating home construction," said Snow.

Proposals Would Help Speed Local Economic Recovery and Construction

Mayor Gavin Newsom and building trades leaders on February 24 highlighted two proposals that aim to speed San Francisco's local economic recovery, create jobs and spur construction in the City.

The first proposal, known as the "Development Impact Fee Reform & Deferral Program" would radically simplify the collection, enforcement and notice procedures for all City development impact fees.

The second proposal, known as the "Affordable Housing Transfer Fee Program" would provide developers the option to reduce the City's affordable housing requirements on new projects by 33 percent, in exchange for a permanent 1 percent transfer fee that would generate permanent revenues over the long-term for the City's Affordable Housing Trust Fund.

"These proposals would speed local economic recovery to generate construction jobs and general fund revenues sooner rather than waiting until the economy is back up to full strength," said Mayor Newsom. "The Board of Supervisors needs to move this package forward to get the building trades back to work and help San Francisco recover from the recession."

The economic benefits to the City of earlier construction starts include earlier increases in construction jobs, property tax reassessments and transfer tax proceeds, all of which would benefit the City's General Fund and budget.

Both proposals were crafted with input from City agencies and public stakeholders from the affordable housing, real estate development, building trades and urban planning community.

A series of case studies of previously-entitled projects (201 Folsom Street, Rincon Hill Tower II, 1998 Market Street, and 2001 Market Street) demonstrate that the development stimulus package could speed up financing and start times as much as two years.

These four projects alone would employ approximately 700 union construction workers and they represent only 1,200 units of the more than 5,000 units already approved in medium to large multi-family residential projects waiting to be financed.

Free GED Classes at Burton High School

Join the Bayview Beacon and City College of San Francisco at Burton High School on Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 12 noon for free GED (General Educational Development) preparation classes.

No classes will be held March 27 and April 3. Call (415) 337-7991 to enroll.

Streetscape Construction Continues on Leland Avenue

Negotiating turns and dodging construction equipment at the intersection of Leland Avenue and Peabody Street proved to be a challenge for two vehicles during major construction of the Streetscape Improvement Project.

Grapevine Mailbox

Public Housing Youth Shaping the Future of Their Communities

What if some of the most run-down housing in San Francisco could be transformed into a vibrant family zone with the best affordable housing, schools, and community services in town? And, what if the youth living in that housing today could be the organizers and community developers planning and leading that transformation?

I am proud to say that "what if" will become "what is" on March 1 when the first 20 youth from four neighborhoods will begin internships with the newly formed HOPE SF Youth Leadership Academy (the "Academy"). The Academy will match five youth with the adults responsible for the revitalization process in each of four neighborhoods. Committing 10 hours per month, the youth and adults will work together in neighborhood-based teams to tackle real planning issues such as:

*How should a park be designed?

*What programs should be offered at the community center?

*How do we engage more youth in helping us make the right choices in this process?

Once a month, youth and adults from all four sites will come together in Academy Saturdays to do citywide learning, team building, and learn about community development career opportunities. Youth interns will gain valuable leadership skills, be exposed to community development as a career, and influence the planning decisions of their community, all while earning a stipend. Participating adults will learn how to effectively involve youth in planning decisions. Youth and adults working together will create better master plans and lasting neighborhood improvements.

Interns will attend workshops, advise the development teams and the Housing Authority of community needs, attend a two day summit at UC Berkeley, and receive a stipend for consistent involvement (up to $75 per month).

DCYF is a lead sponsor of this program and is excited to join the efforts of the HOPE SF initiative leaders—the Mayor's Office of Housing and the San Francisco Housing Authority—to create a strong youth component for their important initiative. An array of collaborators have signed on to make this program a success including: Citibank Foundation, Enterprise Community Partners, Inc.; Interagency Council; Japanese Community Youth Council; the San Francisco Youth Commission; UC Berkeley's Center for Cities & Schools; and each of the participating development teams including: Bridge Housing Corporation, EM Johnson tnterest, Mercy Housing California, and The John Stewart Company.

Maria Su, Director, SF Department of Children, Youth & Their Families

The High Price We All Pay for Truancy

by Senator Mark Leno

Law enforcement agencies, school officials and district attorneys across California are teaming up to help combat crime before it happens – by making sure our youth stay in school. Truancy and chronic school absence, an alarming problem in our state, have been identified as one of the early warning signs for students who are at greater risk of becoming involved with gangs, drugs, alcohol or violence.

School truancy has lifelong consequences for students and our communities. Research shows that there is a strong connection between truancy and crime. 75% of children who are habitually truant will not graduate from high school and are more likely to end up in prison. In fact, 82% of prisoners today are high school dropouts.

The crimes that these high school dropouts commit cost the state $1.1 billion per year, according to the UC Santa Barbara California Dropout Research Project. That cost increases to an astonishing $24 billion a year when social and medical costs and wage tax and other economic losses are calculated. By addressing truancy issues early on, we not only help prevent future crimes and improve public safety, but we also save precious state resources.

As Chair of the Senate Public Safety Committee, I held a hearing in February on the topic of "Why Truancy and Chronic School Absence Matter to Public Safety." In these fiscal times, the high rate of incarceration and its drain on our public resources tends to capture most of our attention. This hearing, however, focused on early intervention and examined what prevention efforts our law enforcement partners are taking at the front end of our continuum of responses to crime, and how they are reaching out to at-risk populations — young, school-aged children.

San Francisco District Attorney Kamala Harris and San Bernardino District Attorney Mike Ramos testified on their successful local campaigns to combat truancy. They have found that collaboration with law enforcement officials, mental health workers, social service providers, school administrators, educators and parents is essential to helping students stay in school. Most importantly, they are communicating with parents and youth to emphasize the importance of education and are providing outreach services to those who need help overcoming barriers that may prevent regular school attendance. If intervention and mediation are not successful, parents of children who are truant may be subject to prosecution.

One of the most effective ways to prevent youth from starting a life of crime is to make sure they stay in school. We know that students who stay in school double their chances of getting a good paying job, are less likely to be involved with gangs and drugs and are also less likely to become victims of crime. I am a strong supporter of local programs that direct our at-risk youth down the right path. These campaigns to keep youth in school are increasing attendance rates and will help give our young people a better start in life. This ultimately will also assist us in stopping crime before it happens.

For more information on fighting crime by combating truancy, please contact my San Francisco District Office at 415-557-1300 or San Rafael District Office at 415-479-6612, or by e-mail, Senator.Leno@senate.ca.gov.

Senator Mark Leno represents the Third Senate District of California, which includes portions of San Francisco and Sonoma Counties and all of Marin County. He can be reached via the web at www.sen.ca.gov/Leno

Consumers Clearing Up All of the Confusion About Nutritional Supplements

Americans have heard a lot of mixed messages about vitamins and may be wondering if they are safe and effective. As with most health questions, it's smart to look at multiple information sources to get the true picture on nutritional supplementation.

"The total body of scientific evidence overall supports the benefits of nutritional supplementation," reports certified clinical nutritionist Neil E. Levin, nutrition education manager at NOW Foods in Bloomingdale, Ill. "Surveys show that most people trust vitamins, relying on them as a form of nutritional insurance, and most doctors surveyed recommend them to their patients."

The Lewin Group has published evidence-based research reporting that the proper use of certain dietary supplements can save billions of dollars in health care costs while improving the quality of life and preserving the independence of seniors.

The occasional negative report, however sensational, should be regarded skeptically when contrasted with a solid body of evidence. According to the FDA's Consumer Update, it's a smart idea to "think twice about chasing the latest headline. Sound health advice is generally based on research over time, not a single study touted by the media."

Standard study designs for drug research shouldn't be used for nutrient research because drugs are novel substances not normally present in the food supply or the human body, while nutrients are commonly found in both places. This makes screening out variables much more difficult in nutrient studies, sometimes overwhelming competent pharmaceutical researchers who are inexperienced in the study of vitamins and other supplements.

Several articles in prestigious scientific journals such as The New England Journal of Medicine and The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition suggest that well-designed observational studies provide more accurate ways to evaluate nutritional effects in people than the "gold standard" methods utilized in drug research.

Jeffrey Blumberg, Ph.D., of Tufts University points out that you can't have a control group with zero exposure to nutrients because everybody eats. Additionally, most nutrients are interactive, with beneficial effects on multiple body systems, yet randomized controlled studies are designed to investigate only single outcomes. He agrees that observational studies are a more accurate way to see how nutrients affect health because they are more likely to include the broad population and bear a closer relationship to real-world use of foods and supplements.

A number of nutritional supplements have shown clear health benefits supported by good scientific research, including:

*Vitamin D: This has been shown to benefit bones and teeth, strengthen the immune system and support cardiovascular health. Americans are often found to be deficient in the "sunshine vitamin" because so many of us avoid direct sun exposure. Seasonal flu occurs far more frequently from autumn through early spring, and intervention studies have shown a direct relationship between low serum vitamin D levels and the number of respiratory infections reported.

*Multiple Vitamins: The American Medical Association has recommended that most people take a daily multivitamin to supplement a healthy diet for optimum nutrition. It helps fill in nutrient gaps when dietary levels may be insufficient.

*Omega-3 Fatty Acids: In addition to helping protect heart, brain and nerve health, omega-3s have been shown to have wide-ranging health benefits for inflammatory issues, such as joint problems.

*Vitamin E: A well-publicized report warning against vitamin E supplementation has been seriously undermined by subsequent reports. A vast body of evidence actually shows major health benefits from supplementing this essential vitamin. Long-term studies looking at vitamin E intake from both food and supplements, confirmed by measures of blood levels, support the idea that this antioxidant nutrient prolongs life and health in the general public.

For more information, visit www.NOWfoods.com or call (888) 669-3663. *NAPS*

Drinking to Your Better Health with a Cup of Green Tea

The next time you drink to your health, you may want to grab a cup ot tea. tt is a healthtut and refreshing drink and green tea in particular provides antioxidants. Studies performed on these antioxidants indicate that they may be beneficial in contrihuting to the prevention of certain cancers, assist in lowering cholesterol and blood pressure and possibly fighting off the flu.

Bottled vs. Brewed

There are different ways to enjoy green tea; however, some may be better for you than others. Compared to equal servings of bottled tea, freshly brewed tea made from tea bags provides higher levels of antioxidants, helps protect the environment by reducing the number of single-use beverage containers that go into landfills, and costs up to five times less than an equal-size serving of bottled tea.

Better for the Body

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, depending on the type of tea and bag weight, freshly brewed tea made with tea hags can contain up to 95 percent higher levels of the antioxidant EGCG compared to bottled teas.

Tea's naturally occurring antioxidants are sensitive to heat and oxygen and can be destroyed during the processing, transportation and storage of hottled teas

Also, bottled teas are often loaded with sweeteners and other additives that can eliminate antioxidants and add unwanted calories. Compared to flavored bottled teas that have more than 100 calories per bottle, freshly hrewed tea, including flavored tea such as Salada's Pomegranate Berry Green Tea or Strawberry Green Tea, is typically a zero-calorie, sugar-free beverage.

Better for the Planet

There are nearly 138 billion beverage containers that end up in landfills each year. It has been estimated by the Container Recycling Institute that the average American wastes 425 plastic bottles per year, resulting in increased energy consumption, greenhouse gas emissions and littering.

Better for the Wallet

Bottled teas tend to retail for more than a dollar; freshly brewed iced tea made with tea bags can cost under 50 cents for a 16-ounce serving.

Unbottle Your Tea

You can download recipes for great-tasting iced tea and find suggestions for other ways to "go green" at www.UnbottleYourTea.com. *NAPS*

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Come and Worship with us each Sunday

12:30 p.m.

The Mothers' Club of Church of the Visitacion will be having their Annual

Rummage Sale

at the Parish Hall, located at
655 Sunnydale Avenue, San Francisco, CA

Friday, March 5th from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Saturday, March 6th from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Lots of new items, clothing, books, jewelries, furniture...

If you have any items you wish to donate for the Rummage Sale, please bring them to the Parish Hall on Thursday, March 4th. We are accepting furniture, gently used clothes, jewelry, and other things you may have. Please no appliances.

Six Simple Ways That You Can Change the World

by Angela Perkey

Every time you tum on the TV, read the newspaper, or go online, you're confronted with all of the problems that exist in our neighborhoods, nation, and world. From unemployment to natural disasters; high school dropout rates to neighborhood murders; and from war to illness and poverty, the problems are seemingly endless and can leave you feeling depressed and powerless. It's no wonder that over 27 million Americans (1 out of every 10 people) take antidepressants. The good news is that we're not powerless, and it's possihle to make a meaningful impact that truly changes the world.

Although most Americans already lead busy lives, it's possible to make a contrihution in a way that's stress-free and isn't time consuming. In fact, most people who volunteer are surprised at all of the unexpected benefits they receive when giving to others. Nothing can compare to seeing the direct effects that your work has on solving a world problem and filling urgent needs in your neighborhood. Changing the world can change our own lives as well. Here are six simple ways that you can make a meaningful difference:

1. Volunteer Online: Even if you're short on time or can't get out of the house, there are plenty of ways that you can make a difference online. You can send emails to American soldiers through www. EmailOurMilitary.com If you're passionate about generating awareness for a specific issue such as a disease that has affected a family member, a great way to inform others is to start a hlog ahout it. Even if you're not tech-savvy, don't fear! Sites such as www. hlogger.com have simple (and free) ways for anyone to create a hlog. Another option is to volunteer through the United Nations at www.OnlineVolunteering. org. There are thousands of ways to make an impact without even leaving the house.

2. Use your Hidden Talent: Have a special skill that you can share with others? This is a great way to help raise money for causes that are personally meaningful to you. If you're a gifted painter and enjoy doing this on the weekends, you can donate one of your masterpieces to a charity auction. Or, if you're musically talented, offer to give a concert at your church or favorite coffeehouse. People who attend can give donations to an organization that you believe in.

3. Get Fit: Commit yourself to training for a 10k or half-marathon that benefits a nonprofit organization that's important to you. These types of events occur year-round and are affiliated with all sorts of causes. This is a great incentive to get in shape, and it provides a way to connect with people who care about the same issues that motivate you.

4. Make Your Lunch: Decide to hrown-hag your lunch at least three days a week instead of going out for fast food. By doing this, you'll save both money and calories. You can then donate the extra money you would have spent at restaurants to organizations that work to reduce hunger, such as America's Second Harvest, Share our Strength, or Feed the Children.

5. Go For a Walk: If you have elderly neighhors that have a difficult time getting outdoors, offer to walk their dogs a couple days a week. This can he a great way to form meaningful bonds with neighbors. Plus, having a canine companion while walking is fun!

6. Be Crafty: Like to make crafts or knit? These stress-relieving activities can also enable you to give back to others. For example, instead of making another scarf that you're not likely to wear, you can knit a baby hlanket for a newhorn whose parents can't afford to huy one. Once your masterpiece is finished, simply take it to a nearby hospital. While you're there, you can take a peek at the babies that have just been born. Talk about a mental health hoost!

Volunteering enables you to connect with others and make a significant difference. Last year, over 1 in 4 Americans engaged in service, helping people in need and contributing to finding solutions to our local and global problems. By volunteering, you can help rewrite the distressing headlines that seem to never end. It's your world, and now it's your turn.

Angela Perkey is the author of "Change the World, Change Your Life: Discover Your Life Purpose Through Service" (Conari Press). She volunteers as the Founder and Executive Director of Students Serve, a national nonprofit organization. Connect with her online at www.ChangeTheWorldChangeYourLife.com

The Way You Drive May Call for More Frequent Maintenance

The way you maintain your car should take into account the conditions in which you drive. That's the word from AAA, which says too many drivers underestimate the severity of their driving habits. As a result, they follow the wrong maintenance schedule.

When polled recently by AAA, only 6 percent of motorists felt they did most of their driving under severe driving conditions. But when asked about the actual driving behaviors that create severe operating conditions, 62 percent of motorists admitted they drive their vehicle that way all or most of the time.

Some of the conditions and behaviors that are considered severe include:

*Driving on short trips of less than five miles in normal temperatures or less than 10 miles in freezing temperatures.

*Driving in hot-weather stop-and-go traffic.

*Driving at low speeds of less than 50 miles per hour for long distances,

*Driving on roads that are dusty or muddy or have salt, sand or gravel spread on the surface.

*Towing a trailer, carrying a camper (if a pickup truck) or transporting items on a roof rack or in a cartop carrier.

"Manufacturers provide different maintenance recommendations for severe driving conditions hecause such operation increases wear on vehicle components and fluids," said John Nielsen, director of AAA Approved Auto Repair and Auto Buying Services.

Maintenance schedules for severe driving conditions typically recommend changing the vehicle's fluids and filters more often, and include more frequent inspections of certain components.

AAA advises motorists to:

*Read their owner's manual and/or maintenance booklet.

*Learn what the manufacturer considers normal and severe driving conditions for their vehicles.

*Make an honest assessment of their driving habits.

*Schedule service in accordance with the appropriate maintenance schedule.

For additional assistance in evaluating driving conditions and determining proper maintenance intervals, motorists can visit any of the more than 8,000 AAA Approved Auto Repair facilities across North America.

These shops have undergone an extensive inspection and meet stringent standards for quality, ability, integrity and professionalism.

Since its founding in 1902, the AAA has been an advocate for the safety and security of all travelers. To learn more or locate a nearby Approved Auto Repair facility, visit AAA.com/repair. *NAPS*

Dreams

First grade students and teacher Ms. Esther Mok at Visitacion Valley Elementary School contributed their versions of the Langston Hughes poem *Dreams*.

Hold n to dreams
For when dreams die
Life is like exploding hearts.
-Jaen Williams, age 6

Hold on to dreams
For when dreams die
Life is like ice cream
That is melted.
-Jonathan Fores, age 6

Hold on to dreams
For when dreams die
Life is like a car
Crushing a turtle.
-Diego Lopez, age 6

Hold onto dreams
For when dreams die
Life is like marshmallows
That are squished
-Frank Kellom, age 6

When your head is down
And your hopes are fnef brown
Hold on to your dreams
Never loose sight of the gleam
Put the stars back between the clouds
Lift up your face, sing out loud

Even when you have holes in your socks
And have hit the bottom of a rock
Hang on to your dreams
Make every second sizzle and steam
Move mountains without a hassle
Soon you will dance and dazzle
-by Esther Mok

New Web Site to Share Innovative San Francisco Policies

Mayor Gavin Newsom announced February 23 the launch of PolicySF.org (http://policysf.org/), an initiative designed to share successful San Francisco policies with other communities. The site showcases a number of San Francisco's most innovative efforts from San Francisco's universal health care program, Healthy San Francisco to the open data policy that powers the City's Open Gov efforts on DataSF.org (http://datasf.org/).

"I am pleased to announce the launch of PolicySF, a one-stop destination for idea sharing and collaboration to make it easier tor other cities to learn about and implement creative solutions, like our universal health care program," said Mayor Newsom. "Our hope is that by opening up our policy achievements to a broader community of government and civic leaders, these ideas can grow and take off in other cities."

PolicySF contains "policy toolkits" which offer readers an overview of the policy, frequently asked questions, an explanation of the policy making process, and a copy of San Francisco's legislation used to initiate the program. The web site provides step-by-step instructions on how the policies were implemented in San Francisco.

The new site currently features a number of San Francisco initiatives, including Healthy San Francisco, the City's plastic bag ban, San Francisco Promise, JobsNow SF and San Francisco's open data policy. More toolkits will be added to PolicySF in the weeks and months ahead.

Additionally, Mayor Newsom asked communities to share their own policy ideas with visitors to PolicySF.

"Perhaps someone in Chicago or Tulsa has figured out a creative solution to a problem and wants to let everyone know how to replicate it," said Mayor Newsom. "We are trying to help communities solve challenging problems together by sharing some of the best ideas from our cities."

PolicySF is part of a larger Open Gov Initiative for the City and County of San Francisco, which focuses on open data, open participation and open source.

About Art in Visitacion Valley

Russel Morine

by Betty Parshall

Art is all around us in Visitacion Valley. Murals grace the walls of commercial buildings. Sculptures complement the platforms on the T-Line Stations. Mosaics adorn our schools and parks. Over the next several months the Grapevine will feature the variety of art found throughout our community. We hope this series will give a new life to the overlooked and under appreciated works of art in our neighborhood. We hope you will enjoy this journey.

Endangered Park

In 1987, the San Francisco Art Commission commissioned a public art project that was to enhance the bayside area at Candlestick Cove, where a pump station and holding tank for water and sewage was to be built. Patricia Johnson was the co-designer of the Sunnydale Facilities, and her intent was to present this functional structure as a work of art and also a productive landscape.

Taking the image of the endangered San Francisco garter snake as her subject, she was able to incorporate tidal sculptures, a butterfly meadow, habitat restoration and seating and overlooks into a public access walk. It is thirty feet wide and one-third of a mile long and covers the roof of the water transport/storage system.

A sculpted earth mound that rises twenty feet above a meadow of butterfly food-plants represents the head of the serpent. The mound is covered with flowers and provides host plants for caterpillars and nectar for butterflies. Except for an occasional manhole cover, both the meadow and the walkway give no hint that there is a working sewer below.

Walking south along the path brings one to the "Ribbon Worm Tide Pools," a small sculpture within the body of the snake. The winding design forms a continuous ramp and stairway that enables walkers to go down to the beach. The tiny ribbon worm can be found along the shore among mussels and barnacles. At high tide the worm's lower loops fill with water, creating habitat for inter-tidal communities. Eventually the sculpture will become encrusted with barnacles and marine growth and provide habitat for shrimp, worms, crabs, hydrozoa, sponges and algae. It will be simultaneously aesthetic, functional, and nurturing.

Continuing to walk south one will encounter depressions in the pavement, modeled on California Native American petroglyphs. These fill with rainwater for birds. Hundreds of prehistoric shell mounds once dotted the shore of the bay and near this site were native settlements. The people hunted waterfowl in the marshes and foraged for shellfish along the mudflats. When the site was excavated in 1919, many human burials and artifacts were recovered from a shell mound at this site which today lies buried under twenty-five feet of landfill. Our bond with these people is the continuity of the landscape and the life of the bay. The birds, shellfish and native plants that we see today are descendants of the same communities that attracted prehistoric man to this place. Their survival is our responsibility.

Many people walk, jog, and ride bicycles and skateboards along this site because it is now part of the Bay Circuit Trail. They also stop along the way to observe the birds and waterfowl feeding in the marsh and the mudflats below. During the migration season thousands of birds can be seen a Candlestick cove. There is the daily drama of rising and falling tides and the interplay between those eating and those eaten. And there are the fine views of San Bruno Mountain and the east and south bays.

To get there, take Blanken Avenue to Executive Park Boulevard, turn left to Harney Way, turn left on Harney Way to the parking lot on the right. Walk south from the parking lot to enjoy the "Endangered Park" walkway.

Car Insurance Myths Debunked

Leading car insurer Progressive debunks a few of the more widely held myths:

Myth: Red cars cost more to insure.

Reality: Vehicle color is not a factor used to calculate car insurance rates. Factors that do matter are the year, make, model, body type, engine size and age of your car, as well as information about the drivers on your policy.

Myth: I only need the state-required, minimum amount of car insurance.

Reality: Many states have minimum car insurance requirements, but the required liability-only insurance may not cover all your costs. If you cause an accident, your insurance might not cover all the damages. Consult with your local independent agent to select the coverages and sufficient limits that meet your needs so that a fender bender doesn't cost you big bucks.

Myth: Comprehensive coverage protects drivers in all situations.

Reality: Comprehensive coverage is one type of protection available on an auto insurance policy (others being Collision, Uninsured Motorist, etc.). Comprehensive coverage pays only for damage caused by an event other than a collision, including fire, theft, vandalism, weather and more.

Myth: My car insurance rates will be similar to my neighbor's rates.

Reality: Car insurance rates are individually determined, so factors such as age, driving record, type of vehicle, and marital status are considered. Each person's situation is unique and car insurance rates will vary because of this.

Myth: If I buy a new car, my auto insurance company automatically knows and my new car is covered.

Reality: No. Most insurance companies require that you notify them or your agent within a specified number of days. Generally, you have 30 days to add the new vehicle to your policy. **NAPS**

McLaren Park News and Notes

by Betty Parshall

Sad Days at the Reservoir

One Friday in February, several of the fish in Shelley Lake (the reservoir) were gathered at the east end of the water, lying just below the surface. There were several carp, large and small, and an impressive sturgeon of perhaps three feet long. We wondered if they were getting ready to spawn although it was a bit early in the year for that to happen. And the sturgeon was definitely out of place.

The next morning I visited the lake again to see a few dead fish lying on the rocks, and learned from others that several other victims had been spotted, including the sturgeon. In the days that followed more dead fish were seen, and it is doubtful that there are any survivors. So what happened? I learned that the previous week the water had been very low due to a leak. Repairs were made and water (which comes directly from Crystal Springs) was released to refill the reservoir.

While there has been no final solution to the tragedy, it seems likely that the intake of the huge amount of water contained too heavy a concentration of chloramines for the fish to survive. Chloramines are a disinfectant added to our drinking water. It is perfectly safe for humans and animals and birds, but deadly to fish because it enters the blood stream. It damages the gill tissues, enters the red blood cells and causes an acute blood disorder. It also does not dissipate for a long time. People who own aquariums were warned about this several years ago when the City began to use chloramines in our drinking water and must routinely use a neutralizer when adding water to the fish tanks.

The fish in Shelley Lake were planted many years ago and provided pleasure as they grew to large size and developed a fine array of color variations. They will be missed for their own sakes, and we'll also miss the heron, egret and cormorants that visited frequently to feed and keep the fish population in check.

There's an Elephant in the Room.....

The workshop meeting at Louis Sutter Community Building on January 26 drew a big crowd of people eager to say what they like about McLaren Park and what improvements they'd like to see. The room was packed and after introductions by Karen Mauney-Brodek, Park Planner, the crowd divided up into several small groups.

The purpose of the meeting was to get lists of people's favorite park sites and features, any complaints, and what were seen as urgent maintenance and improvement projects. In addition, folks were asked to designate what projects could be designated as "short-term" and "long-term." (For example, placement of recycle and compost bins in the park was reported to be implemented once a survey of sites was completed. This could possibly be considered "short-term." See Grapevine, May 2009)

The people reconvened to turn in the groups' lists. Time did not permit for reporting results, but all of the information will be tallied and shared at the next workshop that will be held in March. After one announcement was made, an invitation to visit the disc golf course in Golden Gate Park, a community resident attempted to read a short statement (at least the paper he was reading from was very small) but he was shouted down by some disc golf proponents who were present. Disc golf was not on the agenda (although on the minds of several people), so was not to be discussed.

The next workshop (the second of three planned) will be held March 23 from 6:30 to 8 p.m. at the Crocker Amazon Playground Clubhouse. Everyone is urged to attend all the workshops as each will build on the information gathered previously. For information you can contact Tina Kim or Karen Mauney-Brodek at (415) 831-2789 or e-mail Karen.Mauney-Brodek@sfgov.org

Spring is Sprung at McNabb Lake

One of our far-flung correspondents has reported that while winter visitors – mergansers, widgeons, spoonbill duck and others - can still be observed, along with several coots, one coot couple was observed apparently starting nest construction. We look forward to seeing a batch of baby coots again.

About the Jerry Garcia Amphitheater

For the past several months neighbors and concerned citizens have been meeting to explore forming a "friends" committee to work on specific amphitheater issues, including:

*The effect of high fees on booking the amphitheater.

*Working on outreach and communication to inform the public about shows and events.

*Putting together a varied Performance Festival in 2010.

If you are interested in staying informed of the progress of this committee or volunteering by joining on of the working subcommittees please sign up for the Google Group by e-mailing attykatz@pacbell.net or calling 415 585-8005.

This committee is working in conjunction with San Francisco parks Trust, the office of Supervisor John Avalos and in full participation with existing McLaren Park groups.

Why Shelley Drive Was Closed

The gates to Shelley Drive were closed a few days in February because a crew was filming a Chevrolet commercial in the park. No word on when it might be shown but it's something to watch for if a Chevy ad comes on.

S.F. Public Library Shows How to Fight Senior Scams

San Francisco Public Library is bringing together experts from the State Bar of California and Consumer Action to help seniors and their caregivers avoid scams and financial frauds that are perpetuated on the elder community.

The program, Senior Scams: How to Fight Back, will be held Thursday, April 8 from 11 a.m.to 12:30 p.m. in the Latino Hispanic Community Meeting Room at the San Francisco Main Library, 100 Larkin St. John O'Grady from the State Bar of California, Trusts and Estates Section, and Mikael Wagner of Consumer Action will provide insight on identifying financial scams targeting seniors, offer advice for fighting back, highlight examples of real situations and answer questions from the audience. The program will begin with a short video prepared by the State Bar.

Among the scams to be discussed are examples where seniors were conned into signing away their life savings by deceitful financial planners; the selling of inflated and unnecessary insurance policies and funeral and cemetery service frauds; and cases of unscrupulous door-to-door sales solicitations offering expensive goods or services to unsuspecting seniors.

O'Grady practices trust and estate planning law and volunteers with the State Bar to offer programs on elder abuse and fraud. Wagner is an expert on a variety of consumer protection topics including senior scams.

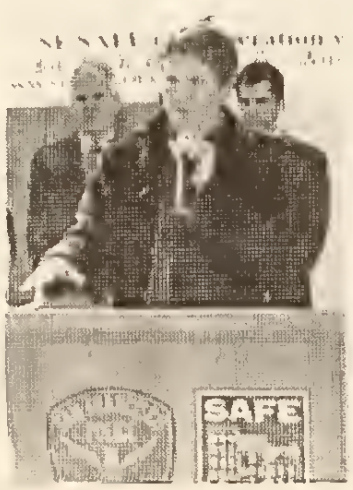
The Senior Scams program is being organized by the library's Business, Science and Technology Center and is held in connection with SFPL's Wise Up, a series of library classes and programs for learning and living well at any age. Watch for additional Senior Scams programs in SFPL branch libraries in the near future.

...from the desk of the VVBOOM newsroom

by Nick Wolff

Lunar New Year Event Draws Police Chief to Leland Avenue

VVBOOM was honored to host the 13th Annual Lunar New Year Crime Prevention and Public Safety Awareness Campaign Press Conference in downtown Visitacion Valley on Tuesday, February 9th. Previously a safety awareness campaign aimed at educating merchants and curbing the high rates of extortion of Asian owned small businesses in Chinatown and San Francisco, a strong outreach campaign put on by San Francisco Safety Awareness for Everyone (SF SAFE) and the San Francisco Police Department (SFPD) has almost entirely eradicated extortion cases city-wide. This year based on a renewed focus on Muni safety and the growth of the Leland Avenue Merchant Watch group, the Lunar New Year press conference took place in downtown Visitacion Valley. A number of merchants and residents gathered at the intersection of Leland Ave. and Desmond St., to take in the event on a sunny Tuesday afternoon. They were joined by members of SF SAFE, dozens of uniformed officers, Bayview Captain Greg Suhr, Ingleside Captain David Lazar and the San Francisco Chief of Police George Gascon who spoke about the importance of reporting crime to law enforcement and how to avoid being a victim of crime. The Chief's message echoed the overarching principles of the Leland Avenue Merchant Watch group, which stresses relationship building among business owners, communication with law enforcement and a shared focus on crime prevention. When it came time for SF SAFE and SFPD to walk the commercial corridor distributing crime prevention information packages to merchants it was no surprise many of the merchants already knew them by name through their involvement with the Leland Avenue Merchant Watch Group. If you're interested in seeing video taken from the press conference, search "Partners on Crime. Police and Merchants Team Up on Safety" on youtube.com. We look forward to building on the strong partnerships already in place with SF SAFE and Ingleside Police and growing our Leland Avenue Merchant Watch Group in the coming year

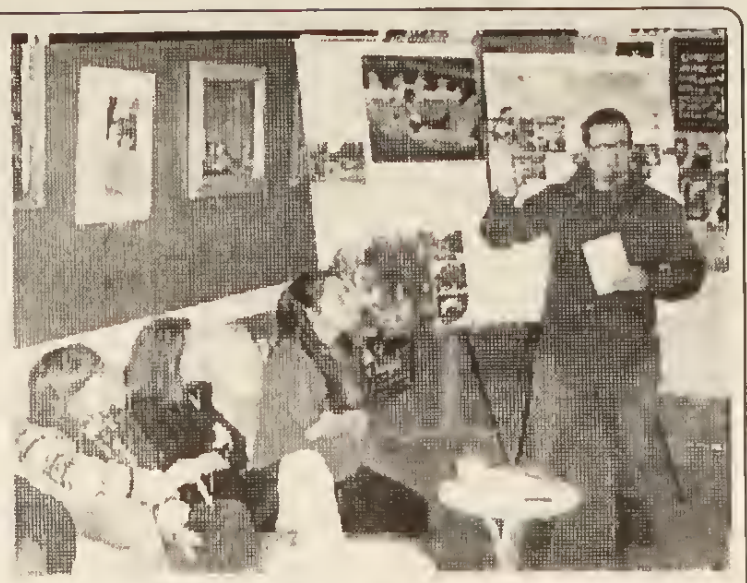


Distinguished Art

Downtown Visitacion Valley will soon have its signature art piece on the highly visible corner of Leland Ave. and Bayshore Blvd. This summer as the Leland Avenue Streetscape project nears completion, Street Life, a playful sculpture made from recycled parking meter heads attached to an 18 foot steel pole arching will be erected in front of the Shun Lee Market. The public art project designed by the artist team REBAR was selected by the community during a public viewing at the Visitacion Valley branch library from September 11th through September 21, 2009, getting approved by the San Francisco Arts Commission (SFAC) on November 2nd. On Monday, February 8th, the SFAC and REBAR held a meeting at Joe Leland Coffee Shop to give the community a sneak peak at what the new art instillation will look like and solicited input on its design. According to SFAC, "The cluster of parking meters was designed to appear as if it had grown to a whimsically tall height and is intended to remind the viewer of swaying grain or other organic forms."

Visitacion Valley Merchant Honors Late Butcher

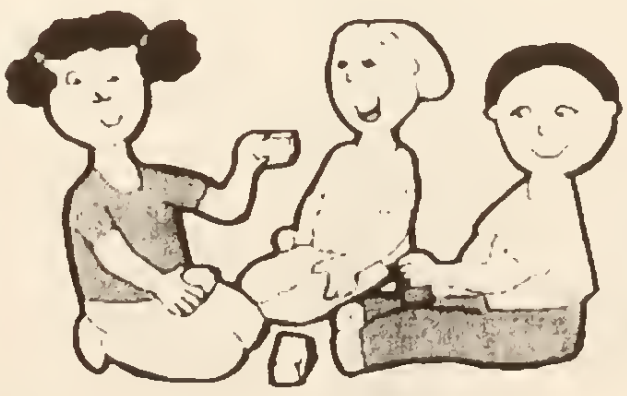
The following piece was written by Joaquin Escobar, owner of La Loma Produce Market – 65 Leland Avenue. It is intended to honor the loss of a skilled local butcher as well as a loyal and reliable man who is sadly missed – Mr. Don Jose. Furthermore, it is intended to acknowledge the strong support La Loma has received from the community through this difficult time. Continue to support neighborhood businesses in Visitacion Valley.



"On February 3rd, 2010, La Loma Produce and Visitation Valley lost one of the best butchers of our times. It did not matter what nationality you were; when you walked to his counter, you were always greeted with a smile and treated with good customer service. He cared about people. Very often you would hear about him attending customer's parties, funerals or even visit customers that were ill. He wasn't just a butcher, he was a friend.

Born in El Salvador, he left his beloved wife and kids eight years ago to better not just his life, but his family's life as well; his family who needed him the most. Visitation Valley became his new home. He enjoyed working in the Valley so much that he postponed his return to El Salvador. Little did he know that when he said his farewells one night, he would not be able to see the next day. We the people at La Loma Produce would like to thank all the customers who helped in raising money for his funeral and his trip back home. We thank you with all our hearts.

Child Care Center in Your Neighborhood



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Joe Leland around the neighborhood

*Rummage Sale: The Mother's Club of The Church of the Visitacion will be having their annual Rummage Sale at the Parish Hall, 655 Sunnydale Ave on Friday, March 5th (9 a.m.-5 p.m.) and Saturday, March 6th (9 a.m.-2 p.m.). Lots of new items, clothing, books, jewelry, furniture, and lots more..

*All-U-Can Eat Chili: SECOND ANNUAL Chili Cook-Off. $10 All-U-Can Eat Chili, Kids eat for free. There will be a $100 cash-prize for the winner! Saturday, March 13, 2010 at Louis Sutter Roundhouse (near McNab Lake) From 12 to 3 p.m. To enter the contest or to attend the event, please contact Trilce at helpmlpark@gmail.com. Organized by Help McLaren Park group. www.helpmlpark.weebly.com

*Crab Feed: The Bayview Social Club presents its annual Crab Feed on March 20th, 2010, 7 p.m. at 111 Raymond Ave. (Thutmose Temple). For tickets and information, contact James Smith at 415-468-4725 or Tony Winstead at 415-469-4848. Donations $35.

*Martial Arts on Leland: Support a great new neighborhood martial arts studio. Kuk Sool Won of Visitacion Valley, located at 189 Leland Ave. (at Rutland St.) offers the entire spectrum of the traditional Asian techniques of body conditioning, mental development, self defense, fighting arts as well as traditional weapons training. For more information, call 415-999-6159 or checkout their website: http://www.visvalleyksw.com/san-francisco/

*Vacant/Abandoned Buildings: The City recently amended the SF Building Code to include language requiring the annual registration of vacant properties. Once registered, a fee (about $750) must be paid annually as long as the building remains vacant. The stated goal of the amendment is " to provide effective measures to encourage property owners of vacant and/or abandoned buildings to act immediately and improve the property." To avoid costly fines, the owner must also maintain the building. Maintenance includes landscaping, regular removal of exterior trash and graffiti, preservation of the physical integrity of the structure; including but not limited to paint and finishes, foundation, roof, chimneys, flues, gutters, downspouts, scuppers, flashing, exterior stairs and decks and finally the prevention of criminal activity on the premises and trespass by unauthorized persons. To report a blighted vacant property, contact DBI's Code Enforcement Services by telephoning 415/558-6454, or by emailing the suspected address to dbi.codeenforcement@sfgov.org. San Franciscans also may report suspected vacant and/or abandoned buildings to the City's 3-1-1 system.

*Quote of the Month: "The young can't teach traditions to the old". -Yoruba proverb

April Special Edition

Parks, Plazas, and Open Spaces

Dedicated Readers:

Next month's Grapevine will be a special edition focusing on Parks, Plazas, and Open Spaces in the Visitacion Valley.

The Grapevine is asking for your input to make this Special Edition Extra Special.

We are looking for articles, stories, poems, and images focusing on open space in the neighborhood.

Tell us about your favorite park or plaza. Where do you go to get away from it all? Where do you go to walk with your dog? We want to hear about the good, the bad, and the ugly. Which park needs more attention from the City? Does your park feel unsafe at certain times? A few lines will do. Articles can be as short s you like (a haiku?), but please no more then 500 words.

Please submit your article, poem, image, or comments by March 19th. We will try to print all submission in the April 2010 edition of the Grapevine.

We look forward to hearing from you! Send to Rmorine@aol.com or by mail to GRAPEVINE SPECIAL, 28 Leland Ave., SF CA 94134 .

Learning Easy Ways To Reduce Stress

Relax. While you may have a lot to worry about, there are a few easy ways to reduce the stress of demanding, hectic schedules, work and family responsibilities. Fortunately, taking the right steps can reduce stress overload and improve your health.

"Stress overload harms the body and can eventually lead to cardiovascular, immune and digestive problems, as well as depression, anxiety and other mental health concerns," said Douglas MacKay, N.D., vice president scientific and regulatory affairs, Council for Responsible Nutrition.

Dr. MacKay offers these tips to help manage stress levels and improve your overall health:

1. Work your mind and your body. Activities such as meditation and yoga have been known to decrease stress levels. According to the Mayo Clinic, exercise can decrease the production of stress hormones and counteract the body's natural stress responses by increasing endorphins and improving your mood.

2. Do a diet assessment. Think about incorporating more foods with complex carbohydrates such as whole grains, oats and brown rice, which can increase serotonin levels and help keep you calm.

3. Consider botanicals. Some plants, such as chamomile, lavender and lemon balm (from the mint family), are known for their relaxing tendencies. In fact, research has shown that the botanical supplement Rhodiola rosea may improve physical endurance and mental performance and reduces stress-induced fatigue in humans. Valerian, another botanical supplement, has been known to help manage stress efficiently by promoting healthy sleep patterns. These dietary supplements can be found in many pharmacies and grocery or health food stores, or through direct marketing companies.

4. Please your nose. Smells that are enjoyable to your oltactory system (or sense of smell) often have a relaxing or calming effect, especially if they evoke pleasant memories.

5. Keep your body's nutrients in check. Excess stress depletes the body of essential B vitamins that are required to keep the nervous system healthy. B vitamins work as a team to maintain healthy brain and nerve cells and help with the production of important neurotransmitters in the brain that help promote relaxation. Taking a "B-complex" vitamin can provide extra nutritional support during times of stress.

6. Just breathe. And breathe deeply. Long deep breaths are associated with relaxation while rapid bursts are a symptom of stress. Try 10 deep breaths in a row. NAPS

Visitacion Valley History Project

Wildflowers in the Valley

by Betty Parshall

Mission brown bell

We are indebted to Viola Rusca who donated a newspaper clipping that describes the wildflower activities enjoyed by Visitacion Valley students many years ago. The picture that accompanies the story shows Louis Rusca (destined to be Viola's husband) and Jean Taylor studying "the same flowers that greeted the eyes of Spanish settlers." Because Louis appears to be about eleven or twelve years old, Viola advises that the article must have appeared in 1936 or 1937.

The article begins " 'Vale of the visitation of the blessed Virgin to the home of her cousin, Elizabeth' was the sonorous translation of the Latin name bestowed hy the Franciscan friars (who discovered it in 1777) to what is now so briefly known as Visitacion Valley."

There were nearly 40 varieties of flowers to be found in the surrounding hills and in the valley, beginning in January and continuing until the last poppy faded in late summer and fall. The pupils would make excursions into the San Bruno Hills to pick just enough sprays of flowers for exhibition. They were careful to not pull out the roots and would press and mount the flowers. They would also write original stories about the flowers for their language lessons, paint wild flowers during their art periods and go outdoors to sketch flowers in their native habitats. While other schools' students carved soap into animal shapes or missions, the Visitacion Valley children carved wildflowers.

The children also learned the associations of certain flowers to other countries and literature – Shakespeare's cowslips, Homer's violets, the thistles of Scotland and the forget-me-nots of Germany.

"This intensive study and appreciation of wild flowers, from the earliest grades up, instills a love of beauty in the children which is theirs for life," says Miss Mary A. Nolan, the principal.

Miss Nolan would have no doubt disapproved of another flower-related activity revealed by oral historians Clarence Wikse and Harry Pierce, who engaged in picking wild flowers and selling them to earn some spending money, wild iris being the biggest prize. However, Wikse did go on to be a florist in his later years, specializing in stunning arrangements made from dried grasses and flowers.

The article concludes with a few brief facts about the school. "Land for the original school site was donated by the estate of Peter Burnett, first American governor of California, who had a home in Visitacion Valley. In the last 30 years the school has grown from 48 to 540 pupils. They're breaking ground for a new building immediately behind the present structure." The new building fronting on Schwerin Street was completed by 1937. The old building was then torn down and that land is now the Visitacion Valley playground and park.

Book Review

A San Francisco Irish Life

In his memoir The Egg Man's Son: A San Francisco Irish Life (Virtualbookworm.com, $12.95), retired San Francisco Deputy Police Chief Kevin Mullen relates what it was like growing up Irish in World War II-era San Francisco, amid sensational reports that motorists were being shot on the Golden Gate Bridge for "signaling with their headlights to Japanese submarines."

And when, to the childish imagination of him and his friends, the German lady on Collingwood Street harbored wanted Nazis in her apartment house at the top of the hill. He describes coming of age in the working-class atmosphere of pre-1960s San Francisco and participating in the tail end of the saloon culture that had previously predominated the "city that was."

He was member of the San Francisco police department during the great changes that rocked the city-and the nation-in the 60s and beyond. He offers one insider's view of that most turbulent era, revealing insights and information about the contentious issues of those days which cannot be found among the stories of those who made the "revolution."

Cooking Corner

Sweet and Spicy Cajun Chicken with Chilean Grapes

1 tablespoon Cajun seasoning blend; 4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts, 6-8 ounces each; 3 tablespoons butter, divided; 2 tablespoons lemon juice; 1½ cups (about 8 ounces) green and red Chilean grapes, halved.

Sprinkle Cajun seasoning evenly over both sides of each chicken breast.

In large skillet, over medium heat, melt 2 tablespoons of the butter.

Add chicken; cook until browned and juices run clear when pierced with a fork, 5 to 7 minutes on each side.

Remove chicken to plate; cover loosely with foil to keep warm. Melt remaining 1 tablespoon butter in skillet; stir in lemon juice and 2 tablespoons water.

Add grapes; cook and stir over medium heat until hot. Diagonally slice each chicken breast and top with grapes. Garnish with green onions if desired. Makes 4 portions. NAPS

Church of the Visitacion

Roman Catholic (1907)

Over a Century in Visitacion Valley

Daily Masses: (Mon-Fri except Wed) 8 a.m. and Wednesday only at 5:30 p.m.

Saturday Masses: 7:30 a.m. and 4 p.m.

Sunday Masses: 8 and 9:30 a.m. (11 a.m. Spanish) 12:30 and 4 p.m.

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EarthTalk

Traffic Congestion

Dear EarthTalk: Short of massive efforts to build a public transportation infrastructure, which doesn't appear likely anytime soon, what is being done to address traffic congestion, which is reaching absurd levels almost everywhere?

-John Daniels, Baltimore, MD

Traffic congestion has gotten way out of hand — and not just in developed countries anymore: Tratfic jams and smog plague dozens of cities in China and in many other parts of the developing world. Here in the U.S., road congestion now causes commuters to spend an average of a full work week each year sitting in traffic, according to the Texas Transportation Institute. While alternative modes of getting around are available, most of us still opt for our cars for the sake of convenience, comfort and privacy.

The most promising technique for reducing city traffic is called congestion pricing, whereby cities charge a toll on entering certain parts of town at certain times of day. The theory goes that, if the toll is high enough, some drivers will cancel their trips or opt for the hus or rails. And it seems to he working: The Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) reports that Singapore, London, Stockholm and the three largest cities in Norway have reduced traffic and pollution in downtown areas thanks to congestion pricing.

New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg continues to push for congestion pricing to ease traffic in Manhattan. The latest proposal — rejected by the State Legislature in 2008 — called for an $8 toll to enter Manhattan between 6 a.m. and 6 p.m., with monies funding public transit maintenance and expansion.

Another way to reduce rush hour traffic is for employers to implement tlex-time, which lets employees travel to and trom work at off-peak traffic times to avoid rush hour. Those who must travel during busy times can do their part by carpooling. Employers can also subsidize employee mass transit costs, and/or allow more workers to telecommute (work from home) so as to keep more cars off the road altogether.

Some urban planners still believe that the hest way to ease traffic congestion is to build fore roads — especially expressways that can take drivers around or over crowded city streets. But such techniques don't really keep more cars off the road; they only accommodate more of them. Forward-thinking city planners, knowing that more and more drivers and cars are taking to the roads every day, are loathe to encourage inore private automohiles when mass transit options are so much hetter tor people and the environment.

And Americans are getting it. According to EDF, puhlic transit usage has steadily risen since 1995, with Americans taking 10.7 hillion puhlic transportation trips—the largest numher in a half century—in 2008. Light rail, hybrid buses and other promising options are working their way into some U.S. cities. To this end, the Obama administration has committed some $7 billion in stimulus dollars to help transit systems increase capacity and upgrade to more efficient technologies.

But environmentalists complain that such funding is a drop in the hucket compared to the $50 billion committed to roads, bridges and highways, and that transit authorities can't use any of it to fund maintenance and operations, meaning that jobs must be cut and routes shut down. EDF is calling on Obama to include significant funding for transit operations in the jobs bill now being debated in Congress.

Dear EarthTalk: I have a new linoleum floor, which I chose partly for its eco-friendliness. How do I clean and maintain it without using harsh or toxic chemicals? -A.J. Maimhourg, via e-mail

Whether you chose linoleum flooring tor its no fuss functionality, the soft feel underfoot, its distinctive look, or its green attributes, you definitely want to take care of your investment in an eco-friendly way for the sake of maintaining it for as long as possihle while protecting the indoor air quality in your home.

Real linoleum — as distinct from synthetic versions or vinyl — is made from all-natural materials, including wood flour, rosins, ground limestone, powdered cork, pigments, jute and linseed oil. As such it is one of the greenest flooring options out there today. The GreenFloors.com website reports that old linoleum — including scraps and remnants from the production process — can be recycled to create new sheets of the stuff. And given that it is made from natural materials, linoleum is practically carbon neutral, and the energy created by incinerating it at the end of its useful life is almost equal to the energy needed to create new linoleum.

Given how green linoleum is, cleaning it with harsh synthetic chemicals and maintaining it with polymer-based waxes just wouldn't be right. Luckily there are alternative ways to help keep your linoleum floor looking good for decades without compromising the environment or shortening your own life span in the process.

Melissa Breyer of the green lifestyle website Care2.com recommends sweeping, dust-mopping or vacuuming your linoleum floor frequently in order to cut down on the amount of ahrasive dirt around that can huild up and mar the finish. As for actual cleaning, she says to use a damp mop with a mild all natural liquid dish soap and warm water. Adding a half cup or so of vinegar to the rinse water will increase shine if that's the look you're going for. To get rid of scuff marks, Breyer suggests dipping a sponge in jojoha oil and rubhing lightly before wiping up completely. Pencil erasers can also work wonders on linoleum scuff marks.

As for what to avoid, Breyer says to stay away from solvent-based products which can soften and damage linoleum. Typical floor cleaning solutions will leave a sticky residue behind, so sticking with something like Ivory Liquid dish soap is the best bet. Also, the hest way to deal with tough stains is not hy scouring; instead make a paste ot baking powder and gently wipe with a wet rag until the stain fades away.

In terms of wax, there are several greener varieties now available. Livos' BILO is a paste wax designed for wood, cork, tile and — you guessed it — linoleum. It is derived from beeswax and linseed oil and produces a semi-gloss finish after huffing. Like all Livos products, BILO is made from organic ingredients and is 100 percent biodegradable and safe for humans, animals, air, water and soil.

For those willing to commit to periodic occasional maintenance, linoleum flooring should last decades if not longer. And given its relative low-cost and ease of installation, some consider linoleum the "green flooring for the masses."

Saturdays are Special at Randall Museum

The Randall Museum offers drop-in, hands-on art and science workshops every Saturday from 1 to 4 p.m. at 199 Museum Way (off Roosevelt, above the Castro). Workshops are $3 per child; $5 for a parent and child combo. All kids under 8 must be with a paying adult. Call 554-9600 for further information.

*Mar. 6 - Construct your own animal sculpture from our ahundant wood scrap supply

*Mar. 13 - Use rubber fish and experience the art of gyotaku, Japanese for fish printing.

*Mar. 20 - Celebrate Spring! Cut, glue and create your own personal fabric flag in a myriad of textures and colors.

*Mar. 27 - Experience the magic of paper marbling as you make marbled greeting cards using shaving cream and liquid watercolor.

Other regular Saturday activities include:

*Morning Family Ceramics from 10 to 11:30 a.m. ($5 per person workshop fee)

*Meet the Animals from 11:15 a.m. to 12 noon.

*Animal Feeding at 12 noon.

*Golden Gate Model Railroad Cluh Exhibit from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Grapevine Classified

VVCC BOARD MEETINGS: Visitacion Valley Community Center (VVCC) regular monthly Board meetings, held the 4th Thursday of each month at 6 p.m., except December and May, are open to the public. Board members are selected by the mem-bers of the community center with dues currently paid, at the Annual Membership meeting held the 3rd Saturday in May each year. Any vacancies that occur on the Board due to uncompleted 3-year terms of membership are filled by appointment of the remaining Board members. At least 75 percent of our Board members must reside in Visitacion Valley. Persons interested in Board membership are encouraged to send a letter of interest to Board of Directors Development Committee, Visitacion Valley Community Center, 50 Raymond Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94134. Please let the Board know what you could contribute that will enhance and improve our organization for better service to our community. You will be contacted and your letter will be submitted to the Board for consideration at either the next Annual election or of any available open positions that might occur within the coming year.

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Visitacion Valley Police Report

Police Cases

*On Jan. 22 at 7 p.m. on the 400 block of Mansell Street, officers responded to a call regarding a fight that was to take place after a basketball game between some gang members. Officers walked through the crowd in an attempt to stop any fight, but did not encounter one. An officer passed one subject, who told the officer to "get out of his face" and not to talk to him. The officer asked the subject what had happened, when the subject pushed the officer. The officer approached again and told the subject he was under arrest, at which point the subject punched the officer in the face. The officer performed a physical control on the subject and placed him in handcuffs and under arrest. Another officer also placed another subject under arrest who attempted to intervene. The first officer sustained an injury to his hand during the struggle. Both subjects were booked at Juvenile Justice Center.

*On Jan. 27 at 1:05 p.m. on the 1500 block of Sunnydale Avenue, officers assisted in a FRET (Fugitive Recovery Enforcement Team) operation. They responded to the residence of a parolee to conduct a parole search. They found that the parolee was not at home, but conducted a search of his residence/bedroom. The officers discovered ammunition and loaded magazines. They later returned to the residence and took the parolee into custody. At 3:26 p.m. on the 1800 block Sunnydale Avenue, officers were conducting a fugitive recovery enforcement operation with other officers when they saw several suspects running from an undercover officer. One of those suspects had an active warrant for his arrest. The officers gave chase on foot and ultimately caught three suspects. The charges for these suspects ranged from possession of drugs for sale to resisting arrest and violation of a stay away order. At 11:10 p.m. on the 200 block of Blythdale Avenue, officers responded to the report of a battery in the parking lot. They found both parties present and were told that one of the female combatants had pepper sprayed the other female combatant. Neither party wished to pursue criminal charges.

*On Jan. 28 at 4:54 p.m. at Schwenn Street and MacDonald Avenue, officers were on patrol in plain clothes when they saw a vehicle with a damaged registration tab. Suspicious of the car having fraudulent registration, the officers met with the driver after he parked the car. The officers spoke with the driver, who gave a story that didn't make sense. The officers suspected the driver of using a false identity and took him to Ingleside Station for further investigation. At the station, they discovered that the suspect had in fact been using his brother's identity and actually had a suspended drivers license. They also discovered shaved down car keys which are often used to enter and start cars illegally inside the car. The car itself had altered VIN numbers. The man was booked with several charges, including driving with a suspended license, possession of stolen property, and possession of burglary tools. At 1:54 p.m. at Sunnydale Avenue and Hahn Street, officers were dispatched to the report of a robbery. They arrived and met with a woman who said that she had been in an altercation with a woman who demanded money from her. The suspect then reached into the victims pocket and took the victims cell phone. At 3:05 a.m. on the 1700 block Sunnydale Avenue, officers were dispatched to the report of a theft. The victim said that her boyfriend arrived at her home and demanded money. The suspect then took the victim's car keys and entered her car and took some money. The suspect then left the scene after refusing to return the car keys.

*On Jan. 29 08:15 a.m. on the 200 block Hahn Street, officers responded to a residence where a juvenile runaway was reportedly sleeping. As the officers entered the residence, the juvenile subject ran out of the rear of the house and was later apprehended by additional officers who responded as backup. The juvenile was discovered to have a warrant for his arrest as did another juvenile in the residence. Both juveniles were booked at the Juvenile Justice Center. At 7:15 a.m. on the unit block Tucker Avenue, a victim told officers that all four wheels were stolen from her parked and locked vehicle. At 9:30 a.m. on the 100 block Brookdale Avenue, officers took a report from a victim who stated that two of his vehicle tires were slashed. The victim's daughter stated that she believed that a girl she has been fighting with slashed the tires. At 11:32 a.m. at Woolsey Street and San Bruno Avenue, officers were on patrol when they observed a subject, who they knew is on probation, with a pair of nanchaku's (wooden weapon attached by a chain) in plain view. Officers detained the subject and confiscated the weapon, placing the subject under arrest as well.

*On Jan. 30 at 10:40 a.m. at Velasco Avenue and Rio Verde Street, officers responded to a call of shots fired and located two areas near Velasco and Rio Verde with ammunition casings of various calibers. No shooting victims were located.

*On Jan. 31 at 1:35 p.m. at 2401 Geneva Avenue, officers met with a Daly City officer who showed them to a vehicle in an alley behind the address where a vehicle was parked that matched vehicle used in a shots fired incident the previous day. The officers took pictures of the vehicle at a witness' request and showed them to him. The witness positively identified the vehicle from the shots fired incident. The vehicle had been reported stolen from a victim in Oakland. The vehicle was towed for further investigation.

*On Feb. 1 at 8 p.m. at Crocker Amazon Park, an officer observed an adult male standing alone in the parking lot of the park. The suspect made some suspicious movements after he saw the officer. The officer stopped the suspect and was told that the he was on parole. The officer attempted to conduct a search for weapons of the admitted parolee who then became uncooperative and physically struggled with the officer. The officer soon overcame the suspect and placed him in handcuffs. A baggie of marijuana was retrieved and the suspect was arrested. At 12:13 a.m. at Brookdale Avenue and Santos Street, a shooting incident was broadcast in the Sunnydale Housing Area. Shortly thereafter two victims were brought to SFGH where officers were standing by. The victims stated that they were shot by two unknown male assailants who shot them as they were standing on the building line near the intersection of Brookdale and Hahn. The officers then broadcast the shooting location to other officers in the area who located the crime scene. The suspects were described as unknown race males, in a newer black, 2 door, Chevy Camaro with 18 or 20 in chrome rims armed with assault rifles. At 11:14 p.m. on the 100 block of Tucker Avenue, officers responded and met with a sergeant from Brisbane PD who had a "Lo-Jack" hit in the area on a stolen trailer. The officers contacted a resident of the home that was indicated on the hit and obtained suspect information. The trailer was towed as the owner could not be contacted.

*On Feb. 2 at 10:05 p.m. on the 1600 block of Sunnydale Avenue, officers responded to a fight call. The officers located a male yelling at a woman in a residence. The officers approached the male and he yelled at them and then failed to comply with their commands. The officers attempted to control the irate and intoxicated man but he began punching and kicking at the officers striking one of the officers. The officers were able to gain control of the man. Their investigation revealed that the man had threatened the woman and she believed that he would carry out the threat. He was arrested. At 8:43 p.m. at Wilde Avenue and Goettingen Street, a witness reported to officers that a vehicle had been broken into. The suspects were seen fleeing the scene by the witness. The officers located and detained three suspects matching the witness description. The witness could not positively identify the suspects. There was no property stolen. They were identified and released.

*On Feb. 3 at 1 p.m. at Mansell and Gottingen streets, a male juvenile was robbed on a Muni coach of his cellular phone by an African American juvenile male. The victim got off of the bus and reported the crime to the security at his school. A call was quickly made to 911 and officers responded to the area. Numerous Ingleside officers responded to the call. The officers located a suspect who was later positively identified by the victim and witnesses. The suspect was arrested with the stolen property in his pocket. At 1 p.m. at Persia Street and Sunnydale Avenue, immediately after the above robbery, the suspect turned to another male juvenile on the same bus and demanded the victim give him his iPod. The victim refused to hand over his property. The suspect then attacked the victim, knocking him to the ground and punching him repeatedly in the face. The suspect then grabbed the victims backpack and ran off of the bus. The victim also exited the bus and found his backpack. The victim suffered a cut lip. The suspect was arrested. At 8:19 p.m. on the 300 block of Velasco Avenue, officers responded to a burglary. The victim stated that three African American males were seen in her back yard after she heard glass break. She screamed and the suspects fled. The sliding glass door to the backyard was shattered. No property was reported missing. At 8:30 a.m. on the unit block Raymond Avenue, an officer was told by a victim that his vehicle had been broken into overnight by an unknown suspect. The vehicle ignition was damaged and numerous items of personal property were stolen.

*On Feb. 4 at 10:14 a.m. on the unit block of Kelloch Avenue, officers responded to the report of a shooting along with numerous other Ingleside Units. Officers arrived to find two victims of gunfire. The victims were treated, and later interviewed. The victims said that they were walking in a park when they heard gun shots behind them and suddenly felt pain. They got up and ran home to call for an ambulance. A witness at the scene reported seeing an African-American male shooting from the passenger seat of a silver Ford Thunderbird, with a second African-American male driving. At 11:31 a.m. on the 1200 block of Goettingen Street, officers responded to the report of vandalism. The victim said that she came out to her car to find that it was unlocked and its steering column damaged. At 12:41 p.m. on the 100 block of Leland Avenue, officers were on patrol when they were dispatched to the report of threats being made. The victim said that he saw a man drive through a construction site he was working at. The suspect held a gun outside the window of the vehicle as he drove by. The victims said that he recognized the suspect as a man who requested employment over the past couple months, but became irate when he was denied. The suspect was described as an Asian male, possibly Filipino, driving a black Kia. At 4 p.m. at Harkness Avenue and Brussels Street, a report was prepared at Ingleside Station regarding the vandalism of a vehicle. The victim said that she came out to go to her car when she encountered her boyfriend's ex-girlfriend. The suspect demanded to speak with the victim or else she would vandalize the victim's car. The victim went inside to call the police, and the suspect fled the scene. The victim came back out to her car to find that it had been vandalized.

*On Feb. 5 at 9:45 a.m. at Brookdale Avenue and Santos Street, officers responded to a call of a victim bleeding from the hand. The victim told the officers that he was standing alone when he was pushed down from behind. The suspect then slashed at the victim with a knife, cutting the victims finger. Another suspect kicked the victim once on the back. The suspects did not take any property from the victim. At 3:40 p.m. at Hamilton and Mansell streets, officers responded to a residence where they met a juvenile robbery victim and his mother. The victim told them that while walking home from school he was approached by an African American man, 19-20 years old, wearing a black hooded sweatshirt, black jeans and a bandana on his face. The suspect pointed a black handgun at the victim and demanded that he empty his pockets. The victim complied and the suspect ran away with the victims' property.

*On Feb. 6 at 5:05 p.m., an officer responded to McLaren park regarding an individual burning paper in a BBQ. He contacted the man who was burning paper, but also had in his possession an air gun, a violation of the Municipal Police Code. The man was cited for the violation and the fire department put out the fire.

*On Feb. 7 at 7:02 a.m. at Santos Street and Velasco Avenue, officers were dispatched to the report of a robbery. The victim said that she was standing at a bus stop when a man began to chase her. The suspect pushed the victim to the ground a stole her purse. The suspect then fled the scene on foot. He was described as an African-American male, about 5'6" and 160 lbs., wearing black clothing with a black scarf covering his face. At 3:07 p.m. on the 600 block of Velasco Avenue, officers were dispatched to the report of a purse snatch. The victim said that she was walking to a bus stop when a man came running towards her. The man tried to take the victims purse, but she held on to it. The suspect then pulled the purse until the victim fell down and another suspect helped to get the purse away from the victim. The victims then fled on foot. They were described as African-American males, 5'2" 125 lbs. with dark clothing and 5'7" 145 lbs. with dark clothing. At 5:57 p.m. at San Bruno Avenue and Burrows Street, officers were on patrol when they saw a subject they knew to be on probation. The officers spoke with the subject and discovered a warrant for his arrest. The subject was placed under arrest and transported to Bayview Station for booking.

*On Feb. 8 at 7:15 a.m. on the unit block of Heritage Avenue, officers were told by a victim that her property was stolen from her locked and unattended vehicle. At 7:18 p.m. on the 500 block of Campbell Avenue, a reportee called the police to her residence for an unrelated matter and then turned over two guns to the officers for safekeeping. The officers inspected the weapons and one was determined to be an illegal assault weapon. At 9:17 p.m. on the unit block of Santos Street, officers observed a commotion on a stopped Muni bus and investigated. They found that two male friends had a fight while drinking and using drugs. The suspect took the victim's jacket containing his cell phone and money when the victim jumped onto a Muni bus. The jacket was found nearby missing the other property. The suspect could not be located.

*On Feb. 9 at 9 a.m. at Brookdale and Blythdale avenues, an officer was advised of a carjacking that had occurred and responded to the area. The officer located the victim and the owner of the vehicle. The victim stated that the suspect, the vehicle's prior owner, approached him while he was working on the car for the new owner. The suspect told the victim that he had a gun and to give him the keys to the vehicle. Fearing for his safety, the victim complied. The suspect drove away in the vehicle. A description of the suspect and vehicle was broadcast. A police sergeant at Mission Station located the suspect and the vehicle and made the arrest. At 9:36 a.m. on the 500 block of Visitacion Avenue, officers were on patrol when they responded to the report of a theft. The victim said that her purse had just been taken from her kitchen. She said that a woman had come to her door asking to use the phone because she had locked herself out of her home. The victim said that she began to feel suspicious about the woman and asked her to leave. The woman left, but the victim later discovered that her purse was missing. The suspect was described as an African-American female with shoulder length hair and black clothing. At 3:15 p.m. at Blythdale Avenue and Santos Street, officers were dispatched to the report of a shooting. The victim was riding in a van with other occupants when a suspect fired a shot at the van. No one was injured in the shooting. The suspect was described as an African-American man, 15-17 years old, with a black hooded sweatshirt. At 6:30 p.m. on the 600 block of Velasco Avenue, officers were on patrol when they responded to the report of a robbery attempt. The victim said she was walking down the street when she saw two men emerge from a nearby alley. Another suspect approached from behind and grabbed her tote bag. The victim held on to her bag and yelled for help. Her husband came out from their nearby home and scared the suspects away. The suspects were African-American males, one was about 20 years old and the others were 12-13 years old. They were all wearing dark clothing.

*On Feb. 10 at 10:37 p.m. on the unit block of Talbert Street, officers responded to a residence to look for a wanted parolee. They entered the residence and did not find the parolee, but did locate a quantity of marijuana packaged for sale, stolen property and counterfeit money. Their investigation led to the arrest of two suspects and the recovery of numerous items of stolen property, and burglary tools.

*On Feb. 11 at 11:27 a.m. on the 3200 block of San Bruno Avenue, officers responded to a reported burglary. The victim said that her parents returned to their home to find that the front door had been kicked in. The victims found that over $120,000 in cash had been stolen.

*On Feb. 12 at 10:41 a.m. on the unit block of Blythdale Avenue, officers responded to a residence in Public Housing and met with the victim who showed them a broken window and a broken door within her unit. At 4:30 p.m. on the 900 block of Visitacion Avenue, an incident report was prepared regarding a known suspect who vandalized the victim's vehicle by kicking the side of the car several times.

*On Feb. 13 at 5:48 p.m. in Crocker Amazon Park while on patrol, an officer located a convertible vehicle in a parking lot adjacent to a park playing very loud music. He observed three

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males sitting next to the vehicle and one appeared to be smoking marijuana. The officer contacted the males and found that the owner of the vehicle was the man smoking. The officer's investigation led him to a search of the vehicle which produced a large amount of various narcotics packaged for sale, a scale, and other paraphernalia. The suspect was arrested. At 1 p.m. on the 1000 block of Girard Street, an officer responded to a residence where the homeowner had discovered that a skylight on the roof had been damaged by a bullet.

Police Cases

*On Feb. 14 at 4:52 p.m. in Crocker Amazon Park, an officer approached a baseball diamond on foot and was attacked by an intoxicated Hispanic male adult. The officer was able to handcuff the suspect after using a takedown technique and called for assistance. The suspect was placed under arrest. At 10:10 a.m. on the 200 block of Argonaut Avenue, a victim told an officer that a known suspect had called him and threatened to harm him if he did not give the suspect a large sum of money. The victim feared the threat may be carried out and reported the incident.

*On Feb. 15 at 12:04 a.m. on the 1600 block of Geneva Avenue while on patrol, a police lieutenant observed a suspicious adult male. The lieutenant engaged the suspect who discarded a vehicle CD player. Additional officers responded to the area and found a ransacked vehicle missing a CD player. The suspect had burglary tools in his possession and dropped his cell phone in the vehicle. At 1:25 p.m. on the 100 block of Brookdale Avenue, officers responded to a residence in public housing regarding a burglary call. They conducted an investigation and recovered a stolen television.

*On Feb. 16 at 8:37 a.m. at Blythdale Avenue and Hahn Street, officers Muro responded to a reported shots fired call. They met with a witness who said she heard about 10 shots outside, but did not see anyone. Other witnesses also reported hearing the shots. A police sergeant located several shell casings, but no victims of the shooting. At 2:08 p.m. at Leland Avenue and Peabody Street, officers were dispatched to the report of a theft from a vehicle. The victim said that he had been told by a passer-by that someone had been stealing items from his work truck. The victim saw that several tools were missing from the truck. At 6:20 p.m. in McLaren Park, a report was prepared about a dog attack. The reportee said that he was walking his dog in the park when his dog was attacked by a pitbull dog. The reportee and the other dog's owner exchanged information.

*On Feb. 19 at 5:43 a.m. on the unit block of Blythdale Avenue, officers were on patrol when they saw a vehicle which had illegal tint on its windows. When the officers attempted to pull the car over, the occupants exited the vehicle and ran. While the driver was trying to run, he appeared to drop a gun. The suspect picked the gun up and ran. Both suspects were lost in the area. At 12:15 p.m. on the 200 block of Rey Street, officers were on patrol when they saw a suspect from a prior incident in which he fled from officers in his car in the Bayview district. The suspect was arrested without incident. At 7:12 p.m. on the 200 block of Leland Avenue, officers were dispatched to the report of a dog bite. They met with the victim who said she was walking down the street when a dog ran out of a garage and bit her on her leg. The owner of the dog said that the dog got out by accident when he opened the garage door. The owner was issued a citation.

*On Feb. 20 at 2:56 p.m. at Bayshore Boulevard and Arleta Avenue, officers were dispatched to the report of a fight on a Muni bus. The incident began when a woman began challenging two other women to fight because she thought they were making fun of her. The woman then began to assault the two victims when they got off the bus at their stop. The suspect fled the scene but was later found by other police units. At 10:20 p.m. on the 1000 block of Brussels Street, an officer met with the victim of a home invasion robbery at Bayview Station. The victim said that he and his family were at home when they heard a knock at the door. When the door was answered, three suspects stormed into the house, one armed with a gun. They rounded the residents into a room in the rear of the building and robbed them. They also ransacked the house before fleeing. The suspects were described as African-American males (all about 5'7" and 160 lbs.), wearing an orange sweatshirt, a grey sweatshirt, and a dark blue sweatshirt. A search of the area was conducted, but the suspects could not be found.

*On Feb. 21 at 3:30 p.m. on the 100 block of Tucker Avenue, officers received information that there was a stolen car inside a residential garage. The officers met with the elderly homeowner there and found the car stripped. They recovered the car and performed a probation search on a man in the house and found him to be in possession of ammunition, which is a violation of his probation. The man was arrested for this probation violation.

Police Summaries

*Jan. 28, 8:20 p.m., Geneva and Brookdale Aves., vehicle collision.

*Jan. 29, 11:50 a.m., Felton and Gottingen Sts., stolen license plates.

*Jan. 29, 9:00 p.m., 500 block of Carter St., stolen auto.

*Jan. 31, 00:01 a.m., Bayshore Blvd. and Leland Ave., suspended driver.

*Jan. 31, 2:52 p.m., 200 block of Blythdale Ave., recovered vehicle.

*Feb. 1, 06:45 p.m., Sunnydale and Hahn St., suspended driver.

*Feb. 1, 11:14 p.m., 100 block of Tucker Ave., recovered trailer.

*Feb. 3, 0:10 a.m., 1800 block of Sunnydale Ave., recovered auto.

*Feb. 3, 09:40 a.m., 400 block of Sawyer St., recovered auto.

*Feb. 4, 8:24 a.m., 1600 block of Sunnydale Ave., stolen auto.

*Feb. 5, 9:00 a.m., Geneva and Carter St., traffic accident, hit and run.

*Feb. 5, 12:52 p.m., 1200 block of Goettingen St., recovered auto.

*Feb. 6, 9:57p.m., Visitacion and Mansell St., unlicensed driver.

*Feb. 7, 5:13 p.m., Blythdale and Brookdale Aves., hit and run collision.

*Feb. 7, 5:32 p.m., Unit block of Blythdale Ave., recovered auto.

*Feb. 9, 9:00 a.m., 1600 block of Burrows St., lost license plates.

*Feb. 11, 9 a.m., 1000 block of Bowdoin St., stolen auto, '95 Infinity G20.

*Feb. 13, 7:30 a.m., 1200 block of Brussels St., traffic collision, hit and run.

*Feb. 15, 10:35 p.m., Geneva Ave. and Santos St., stolen auto.

*Feb. 16, 11:02 a.m., 200 block of Blythdale Ave., recovered truck.

*Feb. 18, 3:35 p.m., 1700 block of Sunnydale Ave., stolen/recovered auto.

*Feb. 20, 10:45 a.m., San Bruno and Arleta Aves., unlicensed driver.

*Feb. 21, 2:17 a.m., Leland Ave. and Hahn st., traffic collision.

*Feb. 21, 3:30 p.m., 100 block of Tucker Ave., recovered auto.

*Feb. 21, 11:56 p.m., 200 block of Hahn St., recovered plates.

*Feb. 22, 12:35 p.m., Sunnydale Ave. and Hahn St., unlicensed driver.

Captain David Lazar of Ingleside Station and Captain Greg Suhr of Bayview Station contributed to this report.

New Credit Card Agreements in Effect

by Jason Alderman

One major piece of legislation President Obama signed last year was the Credit Card Accountability, Responsibility and Disclosure (CARD) Act, which made fundamental changes to credit card agreements. Some provisions were adopted last summer, but the bulk of them took effect February 22, 2010.

Here's an overview of a few major changes:

Restrictions on interest rate increases. The annual percentage rate (APR) for interest on new credit card accounts cannot be increased during the first year unless:

*A clearly disclosed introductory period (teaser rate) ends; also, such introductory periods now must be at least six months long;

*It's a variable-rate (vs. fixed-rate) card and the APR is tied to an index that increases (e.g., U.S. Treasuries);

*You enter a debt repayment workout plan and don't comply with its terms; or

*You are over 60 days late making at least the minimum monthly payment. Note: the new rules say the previous APR must be restored after you've made six months of on-time payments.

More advance notice. After the first year, banks and credit unions that issue credit cards may raise the APR on new transactions, or make other significant account changes, only after providing 45 days' advance notice.

Also, you must be given an opportunity to cancel the card before these changes take effect and pay off the balance at the old rate.

Interest rate review. Every six months, card issuers must review accounts whose interest rates were increased based on market conditions, cardholder creditworthiness or other factors; and, if warranted they must reduce the rate or provide written notice why the increase should still apply. (Effective August 22, 2010.)

Bill and payment timing. Credit card statements must be mailed at least 21 days before the balance is due.

Also, payments must be credited as on-time if received by 5 p.m. on the due date.

Order of balances paid. When one card carries balances at different interest rates – such as one rate for purchases and another for balance transfers – payments must be applied to the highest-rate balance first.

Enhanced statements. Credit card statements must clearly post how much you've paid in interest and fees for the year, the upcoming due date and potential late fees, and how long it would take to pay off your bill making minimum payments – including total interest charges.

A few other highlights:

*Over-the-limit fees cannot be charged unless you have previously agreed (opted in) to allow charges over your credit limit.

*You cannot be charged additional fees for paying your bill online or by phone.

*Card issuers may no longer factor in average daily balances from a previous billing cycle that wasn't fully paid off when calculating current interest charges (known as "double-cycle billing").

*People under 21 must have an adult co-signer in order to open an account unless they can prove their ability to repay their account balance.

To learn more about particular changes to your credit card agreements, contact the bank or credit union issuing your card, or visit www.fdic.gov.

In addition, always read mailings from issuers to ensure you're up-to-date on any account changes.

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Historic Proportions

2009

Match clues to answers.

1. Presidency of the Council of the European Union on Jan. 1.
2. Agreement came into force Dec. 1.
3. On Aug. 3, first South American country to declare right of indigenous people to govern themselves.
4. Presidency of the European Union on July 1.
5. Government and banking system collapsed Jan. 26.
6. News legend died on July 17.
7. President João Bernardo Vieira assassinated on Mar. 2.
8. Super Bowl 43 winners on Feb. 1.
9. Deady bushfires here Feb. 7 killed 173 and left 7,500 homeless.
10. World Series champs on Nov. 4.
11. Death on June 25 caused outpouring of worldwide grief.
12. Fifth Summit of the Americas was here Apr. 17.

A. Iceland
B. Walter Cronkite
C. Michael Jackson
D. Czech Republic
E. Guinea-Bissau
F. Trinidad
G. Bolivia
H. Treaty of Lisbon
I. New York Yankees
J. Pittsburgh Steelers
K. Sweden
L. Australia

Answers: 1-D, 2-H, 3-G, 4-K, 5-A, 6-B, 7-E, 8-J, 9-L, 10-I, 11-C, 12-F.

As a Matter of Fact

*For a brief time in 1998, Lake Champlain – on the border of Vermont and New York – was officially designated as the sixth Great Lake.

*The first permanent European settlement of Canada was headed by explorer Samuel de Champlain in Nova Scotia in 1605.

*Running a toothpick through a clove of garlic before you add it to soup or stew will make it easier to find before serving.

*Only three Presidents graduated from military academies: Grant and Eisenhower (West Point) and Carter (Annapolis).

*Apple trees were grown and prized by the people of ancient Rome. It is believed that they took apples with them when they conquered England.

*The section of a circus tent where clowns put on their makeup and store their props is called Clown Alley.

Grapevine Five Years Ago

MARCH 2005

*With City Planning having expressed interest in acquiring the closed Travelodge site on Bayshore Boulevard near US101 for new housing, Visitacion Valley residents expressed their concerns on drawings presented by a developer and architect for the new town houses and multi-family units at Planning Alliance meetings.

*Ashley Castromero became spelling bee champion at Visitacion Valley Elementary School for 2005.

*The Dave Matthews Band donated $250,000 to rebuild a playground in the Sunnydale housing complex. Money was raised by the band at a charity concert in Golden Gate Park.

*Burton High School was planning to install a synthetic sports playing surface in the summer thanks to a $200,000 grant from the National Football League (NFL) Grassroots Program, a partnership between the NFL, Youth Football fund and the Bay Area Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC)

SEZ WHO?

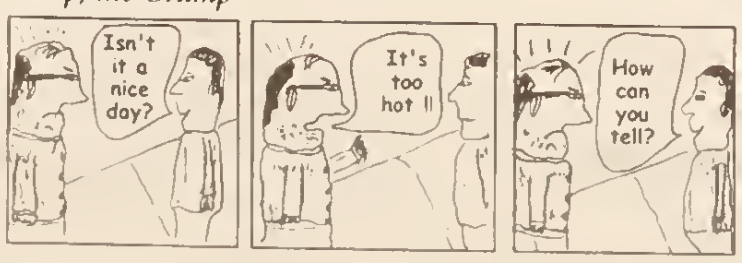
Match quotes to speakers.

1. "If you want children to keep their feet on the ground, put some responsibility on their shoulder."
2. "Patience: A minor form of despair disguised as a virtue."
3. "Don't worry that children never listen to you; worry that they are always watching you."
4. "Beware the fury of a atient man."
5. "A rich man is nothing but a poor man with money."
6. "A nickel ain't worth a dime anymore."
7. "If all the economists were laid end to end, they'd never reach a conclusion."
8. "Inflation is taxation without legislation."
9. "Genius is nothing but a great aptitude for patience."

A. John Dryden
B. Yogi Berra
C. Abigail Van Buren
D. George-Louis de Buffon
E. George Bernard Shaw
F. Milton Friedman
G. Ambrose Bierce
H. W.C. Fields
I. Robert Fulghum

Answers: 1-C, 2-G, 3-I, 4-A, 5-H, 6-B, 7-E, 8-F, 9-D.

Sump, the Grump



Speaking Auto Tech

You may be better able to stay on the road to safety and savings the next time you need to have your car repaired if you select a quality facility and learn to speak a little "auto tech."

When communicating with an automotive technician, AAA recommends motorists do the following:

*Before taking the vehicle to a repair facility, write down the symptoms and any performance issues so important information is not overlooked or forgotten.

*Describe the symptoms to the technician. Explain what has been seen, smelled, heard and felt while driving the vehicle. For example, does it vibrate or pull to the left? Explain under what type of driving conditions the problem takes place and how long ago it started.

*When describing symptoms, refer to the driver side and passenger side of the vehicle rather than the right or left side.

*If the vehicle has been serviced recently, bring copies of the previous repair orders rather than trying to explain what work was done.

*Ask questions if the technician uses jargon you don't understand or if something is not thoroughly explained. Quality technicians will take the time to clearly explain the problem before offering a repair solution.

*Always read the repair order before signing it and authorizing any work. Look for specific instructions detailing the maintenance to be done, the problem to be corrected and the work to be performed. If the language is vague or unclear, ask that it be rewritten.

To help motorists get good repairs, AAA, the country's largest motoring and leisure travel organization, has more than 8,000 AAA Approved Auto Repair facilities across North America.

These shops must meet and maintain stringent quality standards for customer service, training, equipment and cleanliness. To find an approved repair facility near you, visit AAA.com/repair.

For helpful information about cars, driving, auto repair, safety tips and much more, visit AAA.com. *NAPS*

Free Saturday Class at Garden for Environment

Jump-start your spring garden with some homemade compost. Aside from giving veggies and flowers a healthy start, composting encourages beneficial organisms in the soil and can help break the life cycle of plant pests and disease. Join Garden For the Environment (7th Avenue at Lawton Street) for this fun, hands-on class teaching methods for backyard and worm composting on Saturday, Mar. 6 from 10 a.m. to 12 noon. Come learn what you can do to improve your garden without chemical fertilizers or pesticides and prevent organic waste from ending up in the landfill.

Visitacion Valley Business Directory

Valley free listings in the 415 area code
Call the Grapevine at (415) 467-9300

AQUARIUM
DRAGON CITY AQUARIUM, 144 Leland Ave., 333-4598
AUTOMOTIVE
BAYSHORE AUTO, 2260 Bayshore Blvd., 467-6130
BAYSHORE SERVICE, 2596 Bayshore Blvd., 239-5239
BROTHER'S AUTO BODY, 2520 Bayshore Blvd
CHARLIE S GARAGE, 2560 Bayshore Blvd., 239-7450
TIGER'S AUTO BODY, 23 Industrial Way, Brisbane 94005, 467-6866
TW AUTOMOTIVE, 2500 Bayshore Blvd., 585-8281
BANK
BANK OF AMERICA, 6 Leland Ave., 622-4501
BAKERS
UTTLE QUIAPO BAKE SHOP, 169 Leland Ave., 239-2253
BARBERS
BARBERSHOP, 3570 San Bruno Ave., 724-4398
EMMA'S HAIR SALON, 35 Leland Ave., 587-7429
THE SHOP (JB), 160A Leland Ave., 239-6709
BEAUTICIANS
AS YOU R, 170 Leland Ave., 756-1450
BODY, SOUL & SPIRIT, 222 Leland Ave., 333-7261
CONNIE'S HAIR, 2436 Bayshore Blvd., 586-8288
HONG KONG HAIR & NAIL BEAUTY SALON, 199 Leland Ave., 333-1005
NAILS BY JENNY, 50 Leland Ave. 333-6800
SHERRY BEAUTY SALON, 60 Leland Ave., 337-9381
BLIND CLEANING
SPEEDY ULTRASONIC BLIND CLEANING (commercial and residential), 1116 Girard St. 467-7506
BOARDING HOUSE
ABLE'S CASA, 850 Rutland St. 333-4664, fax 333-4693
BOOKKEEPERS
AMY ARAGON PROFESSIONAL BOOKKEEPER, 467-8927
VERNA WALLACE E A., 2320 Bayshore Blvd., 239-5333
CARPETS
HANSAN INTERIORS, 41 Leland Ave., 333-6382
CHURCHES
CHURCH OF THE VISITACION, 655 Sunnydale Ave., 494-5517, fax 494-5513
IGLESIA EL ESPIRITU SANTO, 38 Leland Ave
KOREAN FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, 333 Tunnel Ave., 468-1213
RIDGE VIEW UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, 590 Leland Ave., 239-5457
ST JAMES PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, 240 Leland Ave., 586-6381
VALLEY BAPTIST CHURCH, 306 Raymond Ave., 467-6055
VISITACION CHINESE BAPTIST CHURCH, 8 Desmond St., 333-4503
COFFEE
CANDLESTICK COFFEE, 2156 Bayshore Blvd., 467-2442
HAPPY DONUT, 2600 Bayshore Blvd., 469-5309
JOE LELAND CAFE, 28 Leland Ave
CREDIT UNION
NORTHEAST COMMUNITY FEDERAL CREDIT UNION, 29 Leland Ave., 434-0738
DAY CARE
CAROUSEL DAY CARE, 261 Hahn St., 469-5353
STARBRITE DAYCARE, 298 Arleta Ave., 656-1887
DENTIST
VISITACION VALLEY DENTAL OFFICE (Albert Kuan, DDS), 37 Leland Ave., 239-5500
DEVELOPERS
VISITACION VALLEY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION, 1099 Sunnydale Ave. 587-7896
ELECTRICAL
TATE ELECTRIC (Joel Tate), 467-4657
FLOORS
TEDDY B's HARDWOOD FLOORS, 309-6342
FLORISTS
IL FIORE FLOWERS, 2466 San Bruno Ave. 468-0145
FURNITURE REFINISHING / HANDYMAN
AMAZING MAYS HANDYMAN SERVICE AND FURNITURE REFINISHING, 6220 3rd St., 468-3129
GARDEN ORNAMENTS
SILVESTRI GARDEN ORNAMENTS, 2635 Bayshore Blvd., 239-5990
GROCERS
CASA LOPEZ PRODUCE, 58 Leland Ave., 586-4745
E-Z STOP MARKET, 2203 Geneva Ave., 585-9240
LA LOMA PRODUCE #2, 65 Leland Ave., 239-7520
LITTLE VILLAGE MARKET, 1450 Sunnydale Ave., 586-1815
M & M SHORTSTOP, 2145 Geneva Ave., 585-0878
PICCOLO PETE, 2155 Bayshore Blvd., 468-6800
7-11, 2200 Bayshore Blvd., 468-8646
SHUN LEE MARKET, 2400 Bayshore Blvd., 586-4851
TEDDY'S MARKET, 298 Teddy Ave
HERBS
SAN ON HERBS, 33-A Leland Ave 333-7469
HYPNOTHERAPY
VALERIE HABEGGER-HYPNOTHERAPY, 371 Teddy Ave., 468-5631
INSURANCE
EOIE EPPS (A H E INSURANCE), 467-0236, Fax 467-0276
ROBERT LEHMAN, CLTC (Blue Cross), 333-0850
KITCHEN CABINETS
LEE CHANG INTERNATIONAL, 25 Leland Ave., 333-2730
LANDSCAPING
SAN FRANCISCO LANDSCAPES (Lic # 932022), 256 Talbert St., 585-9137 sflandscapes.com
LAUNDRY/CLEANERS
BAY WASH, 44 Leland Ave
CITY WASH, 83 Leland Ave., 333-9467
COIN WASH & DRY LAUNDRY, 186 Leland Ave
FORTY-NINER CLEANERS, 51 Leland Ave., 239-6418
LELAND AVENUE CLEANERS, 151 Leland Ave., 586-1412
VALLEY LAUNDRY, 90 Leland Ave
VISITACION VALLEY LAUNDRY, 108 Leland Ave., 239-9030
LEARNING
FIRST PLACE 2 START, 1252 Sunnydale Ave., 333-2659
HERITAGE HOMES CHILD AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT CENTER, 245 Rey St., 586-8700
JOHN KING CHILD AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT CENTER, 500 Raymond Ave., 333-1375
VISITACION VALLEY COMMUNITY BEACON CENTER, 450 Raymond Ave., 452-4907
VISITACION VALLEY COMMUNITY CENTER CHILDRENS PROGRAMS, 103 Tucker Ave., 467-5565
VISITACION VALLEY FAMILY SCHOOL, 325 Leland Ave., 585-9320
LIBRARY
VISITACION VALLEY BRANCH, 45 Leland Ave., 239-5270
MANUFACTURER
SEE'S CANDIES INC., 345 Schwerin St.
MEDICAL
AMERICAN REO CROSS, BAY AREA CHAPTER, 1704 Sunnydale Ave., 584-3620
HAWKINS VILLAGE MEDICAL CLINIC (Dept. of Public Health), 1099 Sunnydale Ave., Appointments 715-0310
DR. SAM HO, MD, 2858 San Bruno Ave., 337-6135
NEW CARNIVAL ACUPRESSURE HEALTH CENTER, 2458 Bayshore Blvd., 337-8100
NORTH EAST MEDICAL SERVICES, LELAND AVENUE, 82 Leland Ave., 391-9686 (ask for Leland Avenue clinic)
PORTOLA FOOT & ANKLE CLINIC (Dr. Divyang Patel), 2858 San Bruno Ave. 467-7500
ORGANIZATIONS
ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN COMMUNITY CENTER, 2442 Bayshore Blvd., 587-2689
WILLIE L. BROWN JR. TEEN CENTER, 1652 Sunnydale Ave., 584-6099
CHINESE FOR AFFIRMATIVE ACTION IN VISITACION VALLEY, 1099 Sunnydale Ave., 597-5779
GENEVA TERRACE PROPERTY OWNERS ASSOCIATION, 60 Burr Ave., 584-2700
GIRLS AFTER SCHOOL ACADEMY, 2050 Sunnydale Ave., 333 Schwerin St., 584-4044
JOHN KING SENIOR COMMUNITY, 500 Raymond Ave., 239-6233
LELAND HOUSE, 141 Leland Ave., 405-2000
ROCK (Real Options for City Kids), 590 Leland Ave., 333-4001
SUNNYDALE BOYS & GIRLS CLUB, 1654 Sunnydale Ave., 584-5028
SUNNYDALE DEVELOPMENT COO OFFICE, 1652 Sunnydale Ave., 841-1683
VISITACION VALLEY SENIOR CENTER, 66 Raymond Ave., 467-4499
PHARMACY
VISITACION VALLEY PHARMACY, 100 Leland Ave 239-5811
PHOTOGRAPHER
WALTER CORBIN PHOTOGRAPHY (freelance), 435 Sawyer St., 587-9471, fax 337-8620
PLUMBING
MARK VOELKER PLUMBING, 99 Arleta Ave., 467-7401
POST OFFICE
VISITACION USPO, 68 Leland Ave., (800) 275-8777
REAL ESTATE
JUSTYNA TO. (Realtor Coldwell Banker), 830-1235
LaFLUE-WALTON & ASSOCIATES, 2428 Bayshore Blvd., 587-8683
ROYAL PACIFIC MORTGAGE, 46 Leland Ave., 333-4900
CATHY KUNE SAUNDERS (Zephyr Real Estate), 215 West Portal Ave. 731-5011 ex. 163
RESTAURANTS
BAYSIDE CAFE, 2011 Bayshore Blvd., 467-2023
HAPPY FAMILY FAST FOOD, 107 Leland Ave., 333-8899
G & L BAKERY & RESTAURANT, 198 Leland Ave 239-6283
LUAN FAT BAKERY, 110 Leland Ave., 585-1167
NAYANT TAQUERIA, 98 Leland Ave., 587-7721
TWO JACK'S, 167 Leland Ave., 337-0433
SCULPTOR
CARTORIGINALS (Mikal Cartor), 2 Hahn St., 239-4138
SELF-DEVELOPMENT
DYNAMIC DEVELOPMENTS (Marjone Ann Williams, CEO, Career and Self-Enhancements Specialist) 467-7608
SERVICE PROVIDERS
CLAER PROJECT, 1099 Sunnydale Ave., Ste 323, 333-3017, fax 587-7481
THE VILLAGE, 1099 Sunnydale Ave., 239-5045
VISITACION VALLEY BAPTIST CHURCH OUTREACH CENTER, 57 Leland Ave
VISITACION VALLEY BILINGUAL EDUCATION, SUPPORTIVE SERVICES & TRAINING, 120 Leland Ave
VISITACION VALLEY COMMUNITY CENTER (VVCC), 50 Raymond Ave., 467-6400
VVCC FAMILY & COMMUNITY SERVICES CENTER, 161 Leland Ave., 586-6998, Fax 586-8027
VISITACION VALLEY BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES AND OUTREACH TO MERCHANTS, 225-5969
TELEPHONE
O & A WIRELESS, 78 Leland Ave., 452-4139
VARIETY
GOLDEN 99 CENTS ZONE, 5-7 Leland Ave., 333-3923

Events in March at Valley Branch Library

Following are events in March at the Visitacion Valley Branch Library, 45 Leland Ave.

*Mar. 11, Thursday: Teen Duct Tape Workshop from 3:30 to 5 p.m. – Celebrate Teen Tech Week and make a home for your cell phone out of duct tape. Learn how to use this low-tech material to make holders for all of your high-tech gear. For teens, ages 12-18. For more information or to register, contact Abby at (415)355-2848 or aharwood@sfpl.org.

*Mar. 24, Wednesday: Container Gardening from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. – Container gardening can provide a solution for the urban gardener with little space, as well as a new element to a garden that needs some rejuvenation. Join a workshop to discuss types of containers to use, and what kinds of soil and plants do best in them. In partnership with Garden for the Environment. This is a Green Stacks program.

*Mar. 25, Thursday: Teen Gaming Tournament from 3:30 to 5 p.m. – SFPL's Teen Services is hosting a citywide Teen Gaming Tournament to celebrate Teen Tech Week! Gaming tournaments will be held at participating libraries throughout the city. The winner of this tournament will be invited to the Main Library on Fnday, Mar. 26 for the championship play-offs and a chance to win a Nintendo DS! For teens, ages 12-18. For more information or to register, contact Abby at (415)355-2848 or aharwood@sfpl.org.

Grapevine on the Web
Read current and past stories from the Visitacion Valley Grapevine at www.visvalleygrapevine.com

SFMTA Announces Free Translink Cards for Both Youth and Seniors

The San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) on February 24 announced upcoming events where customers can apply for a free youth or senior TransLink card.

Events began taking place at San Francisco Muni Metro stations on February 25.

TransLink is the convenient way to pay for rides on many Bay Area transit services. The TransLink card stores value in the form of electronic cash (e-cash) and transit passes.

In addition to being accepted on Muni, TransLink also is accepted by AC Transit, BART, Caltrain, Dumbarton Express, and Golden Gate Transit and Ferry.

Youth and senior discounts are available with TransLink, but customers must apply in person for a specially encoded youth or senior TransLink card.

Appropriate discounts will be applied when customers use their cards.

The normal fee for a TransLink card is $5. For a limited time, SFMTA is waiving the $5 fee.

To make it easier for youths and seniors to begin using TransLink, SFMTA is holding a series of promotional events at Muni Metro stations and at the first Sunday Streets event, where customers can apply in person for their free youth or senior TransLink card. Events will take place as follows:

*Mar. 1: Embarcadero Station, 7 a.m. to 10 a.m.

*Mar. 2: Montgomery Station, 4 p.m. to 7 p.m.

*Mar. 14: Sunday Streets (See www.sundaystreetssf.com); 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

*Mar. 30: Embarcadero Station, 7 a.m. to 10 a.m.

*March 31: Montgomery Station, 4 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Customers who wish to apply for a free youth or senior TransLink card should bring one of the following accepted forms of identification: birth certificate, driver's license, San Francisco city identification card, alien registration/permanent resident card, Matricula Consular/Consular identification card, military identification card, military dependent identification card, or a passport.

After submitting an application, applicants will receive their cards in the mail within seven to 10 business days.

Once customers have a youth or senior TransLink card, they may load their Muni discounted monthly pass on their TransLink cards; they also may load e-cash on their cards and pay the equivalent of a youth or senior cash fare.

The TransLink card stores passes and cash value and automatically deducts the correct fare and calculates transfers and discounts.

As of January 2010, boardings on Muni with the TransLink card averaged more than 11,000 per weekday.

Over the next year, the SFMTA will start to phase out the costly distribution and management of printed paper passes, replacing them with the multi-use, durable TransLink card.

Currently Regional Transit Connection (RTC) customers receive their RTC Identification on a TransLink card.

They may begin using the payment functions of TransLink at any time.

For more information about the youth and senior TransLink card promotional events, visit www.sfmta.com or call 311.

For more information about TransLink, visit www.translink.org.

Taxpayers Should be Aware of Changes on 2009 Returns

by Jason Alderman

April 15 is right around the corner. If a chill just went down your spine, chances are you haven't yet organized your income tax paperwork, let alone filed your return.

Even if you can't file or pay your taxes by April 15, it's vital to at least request an extension by then; otherwise, the penalty on taxes owed increases dramatically – generally an additional 5 percent of taxes owed for each month you're late, plus interest, up to a maximum penalty of 25 percent.

However, if you file your return or request an extension by April 15, the penalty drops to 0.5 percent per month, plus interest. Contact the IRS early if you won't be able to pay on time; they may even waive the penalty, depending on your circumstances. Call 800-829-1040 or visit www.irs.gov for more information.

Another way to avoid a penalty: The IRS does accept payment by credit or debit card, with a small convenience fee that is tax deductible. Just be sure you can pay off your credit card balance within a few months, or the interest accrued might exceed the penalty.

Here are several 2009 federal income tax changes to keep in mind as you fill out your return:

New homeowner tax credit. If you bought a home in 2009 and hadn't owned one during the previous three years, you may be eligible for a credit of up to $8,000; in addition, existing homeowners who bought a new primary residence after November 7, 2009, may also be eligible for a credit of up to $6,500. Eligibility rules and deadlines are complicated, so read "First-Time Home-buyer Credit" at www.irs.gov for details.

New vehicle tax deduction. If you bought a new (not used) car, RV or motorcycle between February 17 and December 31, 2009, you can deduct state and local sales and excise taxes, with certain limitations, even if you don't itemize deductions. Read "Sales Tax Deduction for Vehicle Purchases" at www.irs.gov for details.

Expanded college tax credit. For 2009 and 2010, Hope Scholarships have been replaced by the more robust American Opportunity Tax Credit. Enhancements include:

*Maximum tax credit increases to $2,500.

*Credits can now be claimed for all four years of undergraduate college, instead of only the first two.

*Those with modified adjusted gross income under $80,000 ($160,000 for joint filers) qualify for the full credit; it phases out between $80,000 and $90,000 ($160,000 to $180,000 for joint filers).

*Lower-income families who owe no taxes may file a return anyway and receive a refund for up to 40 percent of the credit amount, up to $1,000.

*Read "American Opportunity Credit" at www.irs.gov for details.

Unemployment benefits. Up to $2,400 in unemployment benefits is tax-free for 2009.

Numerous free or low-cost tax-preparation services are available to seniors, military and low- and middle-income taxpayers, including:

*IRS-sponsored programs. (Search "Free Tax Preparation" at www.irs.gov).

*AARP volunteers provide free tax preparation to low- and middle-income taxpayers, particularly those over age 60 (www.aarp.org/money/taxaide.)

Steve
MOSS

Paid for by Steve Moss for District 10 Supervisor.
Thomas Pena, Treasurer, www mossfordistrict10 com

Visitacion Valley Family and Community Services Center

For a Better, Healthier, Safer Community for All

We Can Help You!

Complete Immigraiton documents, assist with SF County paperwork (Medi-Cal, Welfare, etc.) , education workshops, referrals to other services

Eight Weeks Nutrition Classes

Every Wednesday
January 27 to March 17
4:30 to 5:30 p.m.

Speaker: Dina Castellon
Community Health
Program Representative

Drop-In Consultation with Mental Health Consultant

Every Thursday,
March 4, 11, 18 and 25,
1 to 5 p.m.

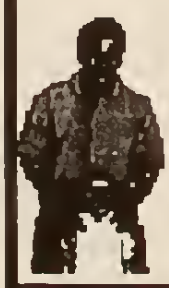
Call (415) 342-4364
for appointment.

Parenting Classes

Improving Parent and Child Relationship, Part 1
Tuesday, March 2
4:30 to 5:30 p.m.

Parent Link Meeting

Wednesday, March 31
10:30 to 11:30 a.m.



Free Food Distribution

Every Tuesday,
1 to 2 p.m.
March 2, 9, 16,
23 and 30
Emergency food boxavallable anytime.
Call (415) 586-6998,
Monday-Friday,
9:30 a.m.- 5:30 p.m.

March 2010 Activities

Enhanced Information and Referral
Every Monday Through Friday
March 1 to 31, 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Spanish Support Group
Friday, March 5 and 19, 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Chinese Support Group
Friday, March 12 and 26
10:30 a.m. to 12 noon

Family Movie Night
Noche de Pelicula
Friday, March 19, 4:30 p.m.
at 66 Raymond Ave.

Van Lam, Marichelle Punzalan
Jack Kwong and Kevin Blackwell

161 Leland Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94134
Tel: (415) 586-6998 Fax (415) 586-8027

I have been studying Visitacion Valley for a long Time.

Cathy Kline Saunders

For All Your Real Estate Needs, Call

Cathy Kline Saunders

415.731.5011 x 163

ZEPHYR REAL ESTATE